



Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative

VOLUME IV

OUR LORD'S MINISTRY

(THE SECOND YEAR)



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(THE SECOND YEAR)

BY THE

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NEW EDITION

RIVINGTONS
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

MDCCCLXXXVII

“Do thou, my son and lord, before all things give attentive heed to the study of Holy Scripture. For much attention do we need in the reading of things Divine, lest we should rashly speak or think aught concerning them. And in applying thyself to the perusal of the Divine writings, with such faithful preparation of mind as may be pleasing to God, knock thou at the door in those parts that are closed, and that Porter shall open unto thee of whom Jesus said, ‘To him the porter openeth.’ And in applying thyself to the sacred study do thou seek aright, and with an unswerving faith in God, for that understanding of the Divine letter which is hidden from the many. But be not content merely to knock and seek, for that which is of all most necessary towards the understanding of Divine things is Prayer.”—ORIGEN’S Letter to St. Gregory.

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PART I

The Second Passover

“ I labour for peace ; but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle.”

SECTION I

THE POOL OF BETHESDA

“ **A**FTER *these things*,” i. e. after the healing of the nobleman’s son at Capernaum, which St. John had been mentioning shortly after his account of the previous Passover. “After these things *there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus went up*” from Galilee “*to Jerusalem.*” We conclude that this feast is the Passover which marks the coming in of the Second Year ; and if so, St. John will supply us with the mention of the four Passovers. It is not, indeed, said to be “the feast,” but “a feast ;” whereas St. John in other places uses the article in speaking of it, or calls it “the Passover¹ :” but yet the Passover on one remarkable occasion is thus spoken of without the article by two Evangelists². St. Irenæus speaks of it

¹ John ii. 13. 23 ; vi. 4 ; xi. 55 ; xviii. 39 ; xix. 14.

² Mark xv. 6 ; Luke xxiii. 17.

as the Passover³. But, on the other hand, St. Chrysostom, Cyril, and most others, suppose it to be the Pentecost. And there is the same difference of opinion among later writers : Ludolphus and Maldonatus take it for Pentecost ; Bishop Taylor for the Passover. In either case it serves to mark the coming in of the Second Year.

As Christ, who kept the Law for our sakes, went up to Jerusalem for the feasts, at which they who were under the law were required to appear before God, so must these festivals be fulfilled in us, not only by the observations of place and season, but more generally, in some extensive and spiritual sense, without the limits of time or place ; as it is said, "from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship⁴;" the Passover, which is the passing out of Egypt, by our affections passing from this world to the land of promise, and so being with Christ in His resurrection ; the Pentecost, which commemorated the giving out of the Law, must be kept by us by universal obedience to the law of God as written in our hearts by the Spirit descending at Pentecost ; and the Feast of Tabernacles, by our living "as strangers and pilgrims upon earth," as they who are abiding in tents under the overshadowing boughs and palm-branches of the Gospel, having, as St. Paul says of himself, "no certain dwelling-place," but looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market," as it is rendered, or it may be the "sheep-gate" of which mention is made more than once in Nehemiah,—"*a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches*;" or it might be, there is at the sheep-pool a building or place called Bethesda, a name which might signify either the

³ Lib. ii. cap. 39.

⁴ Isa. lxvi. 23.

house of outpouring or the house of mercy. "*In these porches there was laid a great multitude of sick persons, blind, lame, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel on occasion,*" or at "a certain season," whether of this feast or some other,—St. Chrysostom mentions it was at the time of the Passover,—an angel "*went down into the pool, and disturbed the water ; whosoever then first went in after the troubling of the water became sound, with whatsoever disease he had been possessed.*" In the case of natural cures, that which is healing in one species of disease is detrimental to another ; but in this supernatural moving of the waters it was otherwise ; as if in material semblance of baptismal waters, there was no evil but what here might find a cure : and, again, not any one, as in natural causes, but "he that first entered," the violent take it by force, and, as in a race, but one receiveth the prize, while many run.

St. Jerome, indeed, speaks of a pool in his time of a reddish hue, as is the case with chalybeate waters. Whether it were the first gush of a mineral spring, or any such means that the angel made use of, matters not ; it was an angel descending, says Scripture : this is enough. Maundrell says the place was still shown in his time, being desolate, with three porticoes only, and no water.

These waters then were as if between things natural and things spiritual, such as to set forth the union of the two, yet one as emblematic of the other ; it partook of the character of medicinal springs and baths, which exhibit in type the "healing waters," but attended with circumstances that indicated a difference, and pointed out a latent mystery. Such was signified by the descending angel, prefiguring the descent of Christ into the waters, the touch of whose hallowed Flesh should give them a power not limited as this of a creature, but for all mankind. For the figure falls

short of the object it prefigures ; it is for the body, not the soul ; it is one who is healed, not all ; it is an angel descends, not the Creator ; it is for temporal life, not eternal. And what were all the world but a multitude of sick waiting for Him of whom it is said, "the waters saw Thee, and were troubled"?

This pool is also, as St. Chrysostom observes, an intermediate step between the Legal washings and that Baptism which they prefigured ; for in the former, not real, but legal pollutions were cleansed ; in this real sicknesses of the body, indicating the power of Baptism in real sicknesses of the soul. For, as the same writer beautifully says, as those who are most near the presence of a king are the more honourable, so types as Christ approaches become more ennobled and full of power. And, again, in the Law it was not water only, but the use of water as commanded by God ; and here it was not water only, but water with the angel descending : and so at Baptism it is not from power inherent in the water, but the word of God commanding ; and not water only, but the Spirit of God descending that gives virtue.

The place, moreover, was connected with the sheep-market, and therefore probably in some manner sacrificial ; and perhaps on this account the Holy Spirit deigned to denote the dignity and sanctity of the place as setting forth the propitiation of Christ. It may be that, as Theophylact observes, the blood of the sacrifices was there mingling with the water ; and therefore combining, as it were, the representation of Baptism and His Passion, or a washing in His Sacrificial Blood. Thus in the Holy City, which is from above, is there by the place of sacrifice the well of living waters, wherein all that is diseased in the five senses may be healed and sanctified.

And what if with St. Augustin we consider this place of five porches to represent the Law as exhibited in the five books of Moses, containing an impotent multitude? Then the Baptism of John may more immediately be represented by the healing pool; where he that lay under the Law, helpless and convinced of sin, hastened first to the laver of repentance in the Baptist; while another was prevented by One greater than John. The Law could not give life, but only show forth and testify to those maladies which it could not heal: in order to be healed, they must first know their maladies; and by the Law is the knowledge of sin. Thus did this place of five porticoes prove their sickness, and their desire to be healed.

“And there was there a certain man afflicted by an infirmity for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw this man laid there, and knew that he had been so affected now for a long time, He saith unto him, Art thou willing to be made whole?” We were made, indeed, without our own knowledge, co-operation, or will; but to be made anew we must know our maladies, must will and co-operate with God. “He who created thee without thee,” says Augustin, “will not justify thee without thee⁵.” Art thou willing? Thine own will perverted hath through thy sin brought on thy malady; thine own will looking to Christ must restore thee; thine own will without His will hath destroyed thee; thine own will together with His will must regenerate thee. This speechless appeal of the impotent man is like that of an infant for Baptism, helpless and stretching forth its hands for aid, by the side of the healing waters⁶.

⁵ Ser. clxix. 13. De Ver. Apost.

⁶ “Nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni Vitali auxilio . . . Vagitique locum lugubri complet.”—Lucret. v. 224.

“The sick man answered Him, Lord, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another goeth down before me.” “Lord, I have no man.” Sin destroys all power of self-exertion, therefore the sinner hath no help in himself ; and sin cuts him off from the Communion of Saints, and therefore he hath no help in others. “Lord, I have no man,”—he knew not while he thus spake that this was the most prevailing appeal he could make, and that he was thus made most like “the Man of Sorrows,” who prays, “I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man.” “I have no man,”—yea, there was a Man near him, the Mediator between God and men, “the Man Christ Jesus ;” the Son of Man who hath power on earth to forgive sins ; the Son of Man who hath power over the Sabbath, for He alone giveth rest. “*Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk,*” in words much the same as those addressed to the paralytic at Capernaum. “*And immediately he was well, and took up his bed, and walked.*” St. Chrysostom notices this custom of our Lord’s often marking the fulness of His miracles ; as to the leper He said, Show thyself to the Priest ; to the damsel restored to life, Give her to eat ; after the miracle of the loaves, Gather up the fragments : so now, Take up thy bed, and walk. And all this may full well be spiritually applied : the sinner, when restored, must bear the burden of his sins, must by repentance take up and still bear about with him the burden of that on which he lay : this is the proof of the reality of his cure ; not to forget what he once was, evinces the strength of restoration in what he has become.

For some reasons there is scarcely a more affecting miracle of mercy in the Gospels than this, for the encourage-

ment it contains in a long-protracted case of spiritual infirmity, after so many years of seeking patiently without release. The earnest will and presence of Christ may again afford power to arise from the bed of spiritual sloth, nay, to carry it with us as a trophy, to go forth from strength to strength, walking in the commandments of Christ. For He that commands gives power to perform. There is an effectual call even at the eleventh hour; he had been ill thirty-eight years, but not yet fulfilled the term of mortal trial, the "forty years" wherein God stretches forth His hands, the date of human suffering and repentance; and, as St. Austin says, of "perfection in good works." But the instance is solitary, and taken out from the usual methods of cure, when the power of these has been long prevented by infirmity and the want of human aid. When ordinary means are hindered, they may be more than supplied by the immediate power of Christ Himself superseding His own appointments. He is healed, indeed, without the water, but it is only one. Many were there, but only one is taken. How, again, by that very singleness, does it set forth the unity of the faith, the one way to life, one Lord, one Baptism? Even at the last, when there appeared no hope, the bonds are broken, the bird hath escaped out of the snare of the fowler. The want of human succour brings in that which is Divine.

Lord, I have no man, no confessor, no guide to put me into the healing waters of repentance, and yet at the verge of our mortal pilgrimage: but, Lord, Thou knowest,—Thou knowest all my desire, and my groaning is not hid from Thee.

SECTION II

THE CHARGE OF BREAKING THE SABBATH

“But it was a Sabbath on that day” on which this miracle took place. *“The Jews therefore said unto him that was healed, It is a Sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to carry the bed.”* What these Jews wanted was mercy, or they would have rejoiced with such a man on his wonderful recovery; but if faith, and knowledge, and prophecy avail not without love, surely neither does strict observance of the law; for all fulfilment of the law is love. Servile work is forbidden, not the obedience of sons, and the setting forth the mercy of Him whose service is perfect freedom. *“He answered them, He that made me whole, that Man said unto me,”* or, it was even He that said unto me, *“Take up thy bed, and walk.”* St. Chrysostom considers this as a faithful and fearless confession in the man that was restored; and that, seeing that it was, in fact, not zeal for the law of God, but envy at the good work which moved them, he adduces this convincing refutation of evil; even as the blind man, on a subsequent occasion. And, indeed, if it had been the keeping of the Sabbath which was the real cause of their zeal, it was the man himself who carried that should have been the object of their attack; for Christ spoke but in words, and if His words were powerful to work miracles, their unbelief was the more inexcusable. Why should I not receive a command from one who hath miraculously given me power to fulfil it? *“They asked him, therefore, Who is the man who said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?”* They ask not from feelings of gratitude

towards Him that had restored him, with the purpose of doing Him honour ; but, passing over the miracle of mercy, they notice only the supposed breaking of the Sabbath : so much had their zeal swallowed up their love, and nothing but envy remained. "*But he that was healed knew not who it was. For Jesus had*" secretly and imperceptibly, as with the gentleness of a spiritual presence, "*conveyed Himself away ; there being a multitude in the place ;*" for He loved, as God in His providences, to work good unseen of men. Thus we believe on Him whom we see not. Jesus hath conveyed Himself away, and is in the holy place with God.

The sick man knew Him not. He knew His power and mercy, for he had experienced these : but who and whence He was, what His name and country, this he knew not. And here we may observe, that the two miracles recorded at Jerusalem,—that of the impotent man at Bethesda, and that of the blind man afterwards,—were both without solicitation and without faith expressed in Christ as the previous requisite, although the will and co-operation precede. The reason of this, humanly speaking, may have been, that in the crowded city Christ was not known as He was in Galilee. But it is observable in these, of what wonderful efficacy faith is beyond knowledge, and that through Christ it may obtain marvellous good, even with those that know Him not, according to human knowledge.

"*After these things Jesus findeth him in the temple.*" So far was well ; for where, after such a recovery, could this man be found more suitably ? and where should God meet him with a voice of warning, but on such an occasion when thanksgiving was on his lips, and a feeling of gratitude in his heart, for his late restoration ? Blessed is he who, after such a recovery, is found, not in business or pleasure, but in the temple. Let us make ourselves the

temple of God, that we may find Him therein. "It is difficult," says St. Augustin, "in a crowd to behold Christ; a certain solitude of mind is necessary in order to behold Him; that vision is in secret, not in the noise of a crowd. Seek not Jesus in the crowd. Our great High Priest is interceding for us in the heavens. He only hath entered within the veil, the crowd standeth without. As yet thou seest not Jesus." And again: "Christ saw him," says the same writer, "in the crowd, and in the temple; he saw not Christ in the crowd;" but after bearing his bed and walking, he came to see Him in the temple, and to know Him, and to hear the gracious voice of warning^a.

Jesus findeth him, "*and saith unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest something worse befall thee.*" This his long sickness, therefore, was the consequence of sin, as in the case of him who, on his sins being forgiven, became whole. And what if this "something worse" be, not only the seven evil spirits that enter into the relapsed penitent, but that in which it ends,—his being cast into that place of which disease, helplessness, and pain are the foretaste and forerunners, where that "plague of his own heart" shall be on the sinner for ever, without hope of relief, even from the merciful Son of Man. And so St. Chrysostom considers it, that it not only indicates the bodily disease to have been the consequence of sin, but that it implies hell also, and the duration of punishment there; for not only do disease and pain of themselves intimate and forebode this something worse hereafter, but if the punishment for a sin, which perhaps might have been but momentary, can continue for thirty-eight years, there is no argument against eternity of punishment from its duration compared with the sin. The same writer observes

^a In Joan. Evan. Tr. xvii. 11.

that it is the cure of paralysis on both occasions, and in no other cases, that sin is spoken of as the cause of the infliction. But all is good, and pronounced good and blessed, except where sin comes in, and then follows sorrow and pain ; and God in Christ is ever as one labouring to remove these. St. Cyril, saying that the very name of Jesus might in Greek signify "a healer," adds "seeing that He is physician of souls and bodies, and curer of spirits ; healing the lame in limb, and guiding the steps of sinners to repentance ; saying to the sick of the palsy, Sin no more, and Take up thy bed and walk ; for since for the soul's sin the body was palsied, He first gave a cure to the soul, that He might extend it to the body⁹:"

"*The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who made him whole.*" With what feelings did he do this ? Was he offended at the warning voice he had received ? or was it as they went and told the Pharisees of Lazarus being raised, from sympathizing with them ? or was it to lead them to acknowledge and worship Him who had done a miracle so great ? St. Chrysostom, taking, as he usually does, the more charitable view, maintains that the restored man must have done this from gratitude, and in order to exalt his Deliverer ; that not gratitude only, but fear itself, would have urged him to do so ; for Christ showed that He knew his past life, and had warned him of a relapse, which this would have been. St. Austin also does the same : "After he had seen and known Jesus as the Author of his restoration, he was not slow in preaching the glad tidings of Him whom He had seen." Cyril also, Theophylact, and others, put on it the same construction ; and it is noticed that he does not mention to them expressly the point they wished to ascertain,—who

⁹ Cat. Lect. x. 13.

had told him to carry his bed ; but what should have softened them,—Him who had made him whole. The difference between envy and good-will is remarkable. The former had said, Who bade thee carry thy bed ? the latter says, This is He Who made me whole. Thus it is in the observation of all actions : charity expresses itself in words of good, and passes over thoughts of evil.

The simplicity of a good man might scarcely have calculated on the effect such a communication would have produced, as it is added, "*And on this account did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on a Sabbath.*" On this effect now produced among them respecting the Sabbath, St. Augustin beautifully says, "He sent among them a great tumult : on the coming of the Lord the water is troubled, but He that troubleth it hideth Himself. By the troubling of the water there waiteth to be healed one great sick man, namely, the whole world, by the passion of the Lord¹."

SECTION III

CHRIST THE RESURRECTION

THE three first incidents which now occupy our attention at the beginning of another year are connected with complaints at not keeping the Sabbath, a charge of which there occurs no mention before. But this does not appear to be owing to any change in our Lord's conduct, for we find that He had already selected the Sabbath-day for His miracles : the healing of the demoniac in a synagogue of Galilee was on the Sabbath-day, but seems to have given

¹ In Joan. Evan. Tr. xvii. 13

rise to no remark on that account; and so also was the raising of Peter's wife's mother on the same day before the evening. And it may be observed afterwards that the complaints are from the Pharisees, either at Jerusalem, or such as come down from thence, bent even on killing Him, as now at Jerusalem. It seems to be the case, that circumstances which had before been taking place either there or in the country at large, became in Jerusalem at the feasts an object of prominent notice and discussion, from the course resorting thither, and the leading part taken by the Pharisees in a religious community. Thus at the former Passover the subject of purification by washing, and the regeneration of baptism seems to have been the chief subject in men's minds; on account of the baptism of John, and that of our Lord's disciples: from hence arose our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus on that subject, and the disputes between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. In like manner the charge of casting out devils by Beelzebub is brought by the Pharisees who came from Jerusalem, apparently after the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus, again, at the last Passover the raising of the dead seems to have been the great object of attention. And here the mode in which this charge of breaking the Sabbath is met in St. John is much to be noticed, as partaking of the characteristics of his Gospel. For he does not introduce this to speak, as the other Evangelists do, of the ox loosed to water or falling into a pit on the Sabbath-day, or of the example of David, or of what the priests do in the temple; but of what is far higher; of the mysterious sacrament of the Sabbath, and of the secret attributes of God with which it is connected. St. Chrysostom indeed says, that when the disciples were accused, He brought forward the examples of saints of old; but when accused Himself, that of

His Father ; which is indeed in some degree the case, but not altogether. On other occasions He Himself also is accused, but His answer is not then as it is when given in St. John's Gospel, who of course selects this reply as conveying testimony of Godhead so high and transcendent.

Whether the ensuing discourse took place before any Council of the Jews, after the last occurrence, is not apparent ; but it seems to have been directed to the chief persons among them, as priests or scribes, from the high nature of the discourse, and some allusions in it, as of their having sent to John, of their knowledge of the Scriptures, their seeking honour of men, and the like. But, on the other hand, there is a solemn, impressive tone in the character of the discourse, which is more like the exhortations of a preacher without, than the replies of one accused before a judicial assembly.

“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto,” or until now, *“and I work;”* *“hitherto,”* i. e. not now only, but from the creation till this time, for else the work He hath made could not exist. He not only made, but preserves in life, restores, renews ; and so also, together with the Father, the Son made, and preserves, restores, renews all things ; of which this healing is but one manifestation. In His Providence God still works, in the motions of sun, moon, and stars, of seas and rivers, and the propagation and nurture of all creatures ; and no less in the kingdom of His grace, in the light and dews of His Spirit, in angelic ministrations and the giving birth and support to spiritual life, He ceases not to work. There is, therefore, in some sense, no rest in God : but in some unspeakable manner, as St. Augustin says, while He is at rest He works, and while He works He is at rest². This your legal Sabbath, there-

² In Joan. Tr. xvii. 14.

fore, is but a shadow that is now vanishing before the substance in the midday light ; but a figure of the Christian rest ; whereby there is a rest from this world's cares, but a work going on in God and in Christ, and in those who labour with Christ, that they may be sanctified in that rest which remaineth for the people of God. It hath been well said, As God when He had made man in His own image saw that all His works were good, and rested ; so do thou expect no rest till thou hast again returned to that likeness of God which thou hast lost by sin ³.

“Therefore on this account the more did the Jews seek to kill Him, because He not only dissolved the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” They are angry when He thus speaks, but His works which declared no less they could not deny : they are angry because they understood Him to mean that God was His Father, not in the same sense as He is the Father of us all, but in such a manner as that He was equal with God ; thinking it robbery that He whom they saw to be a Man should make Himself equal with God. For they beheld but the Flesh, but the Word that was “made Flesh and dwelt among us” they saw not, as St. Augustin says. Our Lord's reply, therefore, is in full confirmation of this, the sense in which they understood Him to speak as equal with God : *“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son cannot of Himself do any thing, except what He seeth the Father doing : for whatsoever things He doeth, these things also the Son doeth likewise.”* The Father worketh and the Son worketh it was said before ; and now He worketh the same things with the Father, and He worketh “likewise,” or in like manner ; for “by

³ Aur Cat.

Him were all things made, and without Him was not any thing made that was made." He does not say that the Son does things like the Father, as if one artificer should copy another, but "the same" things; nor as if subordinate, as the soul acts through the body, but "in like manner." And as He does all the same things in the same manner, this implies sameness of nature; while the very form of expression intimates plurality of Persons and distinction; for He does what He sees the Father do: He that sees and He that is seen must be Two Persons; but to do the same things in the same manner implies Oneness also. For this unity and identity of action is not as among men from weakness or inferiority, but from Divine union unspeakable: "*For the Father loveth the Son,*"—the expression had been used before in this Gospel, except that the word translated in the two places "loveth" is different in the Greek⁴. If, says St. Austin, love makes men to be "of one heart and of one soul⁵," how much more in the very fountain itself of love is God the Father and God the Son but one God⁶. "*For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things which He Himself doeth; and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may wonder.*" For this paralytic's being thus quickened on the Sabbath and restored, is but a type of the great Sabbath and quickening of the dead on the last day by the Son of Man, when awful amazement shall take the place of these reproaches. "That ye may wonder;" such sublime simplicity is there in Divine words!

St. Austin supposes, that as the former expressions spoke of Christ as the Son of God, these refer rather to

⁴ Ἀγαπᾷ, iii. 35; φιλεῖ, v. 20.

⁵ Acts iv. 32.

⁶ In Evan. Joan. Tr. xviii.

His human nature, as one with us ; for there are works to be shown Him in the dispensation of time for the sake of us His members, with this end and purpose, "that ye may marvel." For there are things which the Son knoweth not in this economy as the Son of Man, but the Father only. "As the Father showeth, so I do." And thus afterwards, "As the Father said unto Me, so I speak⁷;" words to express, in a human manner, Divine ineffable communion ; as also, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him⁸." The same is said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak⁹." St. Augustin explains at great length, that this showing here spoken of is after a Divine incomprehensible manner, quite unlike that which is by human organs¹. "Greater works," says the same writer, "than these healings of bodies ; for greater is the resurrection of the body unto life eternal, than the restoration of this sick man's body for a time²." The subject of the Resurrection is here introduced as arising out of the healing of the paralytic, which was in anticipation of the general Resurrection ; and, in like manner, is introduced the judgment which follows on resurrection. These are both connected here also, as our Lord says to the man after his restoration, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, so also the Son quickeneth whom He will ;" implying both unity of power and unity of will ; for the Father quickeneth whom He will, and the Son quickeneth whom He will ; but the same are quickened by the Father and the Son ; for whatsoever the Father doeth, the same and

⁷ In Evan. Joan. Tr. xii. 50.

⁸ Ibid. viii. 26.

⁹ Ibid. xvi. 13

¹ In Joan. Tr. xxiii.

² Ibid. xxiv. 12.

in like manner doeth the Son ; being in all their operations, together with the Holy Spirit, undivided and inseparable. Thus in the Revelation it is said of Christ, that He hath the keys of death and of hell³; the attribute of God : “ I am He, and there is no God with Me : I kill, and I make alive⁴.”

But in a peculiar manner, as partaking of our nature, is Christ made meet to become our Judge. “ *For neither doth the Father judge any one ; but all judgment hath He given to the Son.*” Yet even in this there is union, for our Lord says, “ If I judge, My judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me⁵.” But in the Judgment it is the Son more especially. Thus here Augustin says, “ when He said just before that the Father showed whatsoever things He did to the Son, I seemed, as it were, to see the Father working and the Son waiting ; now again I see the Son working, the Father resting⁶.” Some ancient writers, as St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, and St. Chrysostom⁷, think that this is imparted in the Divine generation as to the Son of God ; but St. Augustin supposes it given as peculiar to the Son of Man. For this reason, he says, hath the Father committed all judgment unto the Son, because He will then be seen, not in the form of God, but as man, in that form of a servant, which He hath taken for our sakes ; and therefore the Father will not then appear, as having not put on the form of a servant. For this reason he supposes that the Son of Man alone is spoken of in the Judgment.

But St. Augustin would confine the former verse of His quickening “ whom He will, as the Father does,” to His quickening of souls by His Godhead, in unity of substance

³ Rev. i. 18.

⁴ Deut. xxxii. 39.

⁵ John viii. 16.

⁶ In Joan. Tr. xxi. 12.

⁷ See Maldonat. and Aurea Catena.

with the Father ; while all this of the judgment he considers given to Christ as made Man. The expression may be thus connected with the preceding verse : that the Son hath all judgment committed unto Him, because He "quickeneth whom He will," as just before stated ; i. e. in order that by the judgment He may know whom He may quicken unto eternal life.

"*That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*" It is often said that dominion, and glory, and worship are given to Him at the Judgment, as in the Prophet Daniel and the Revelation ; that unto Him, on account of His humiliation, "every knee shall bow ;" and as our Lord Himself says, "I overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne⁸." "*He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, which hath sent Him.*"

Again : as to Me is consigned this Judgment and Resurrection, so in Me is this regeneration and divine Sabbath of a new life. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you :*"—on which repetition St. Augustin beautifully says, "He returneth again to the resurrection of souls, in order that we may receive Him in His continual saying ; for we were not able to follow after the Word, flying, as it were, away from us. Lo ! the Word of God cometh to linger and abide with us ; behold ! He dwelleth, as it were, with our infirmities⁹." "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.*" It is not said, "believeth on Me," but "on Him that sent Me ;" for as the Son is the Word of the Father, not to believe Him is not to believe the Father. It might be translated, that he shall not come into "judgment ;" but it evidently means, as

⁸ Rev. iii. 21.

⁹ Tr. xxiii. 14.

here rendered, "condemnation;" as it is the same word soon after used for "the resurrection of condemnation." For all shall come into judgment. He "is passed from death unto life," as being already in Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life; his life is even now hid with Christ in God.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The Son of Man is spoken of as judging, yet it is the voice of the Son of God that quickeneth the dead. The hour cometh, "and now is," on account of the speedy coming of the last day, as it is always described to be with God, with whom a thousand years are but as one day. Thus St. Chrysostom takes it as applicable to the last day; or again, this raising which "now is," is applied to the raising of Lazarus and others to this temporal life. St. Augustin makes a distinction between this raising of the dead and that which is afterwards spoken of; applying this to the resurrection of souls in this life. And, indeed, there is no reason why it may not be taken in both these senses, as Christ is Himself emphatically the Resurrection. His miraculously raising of the bodies of the dead, and His spiritually becoming from this time the Resurrection of souls to righteousness, is, as it were, already the beginning and pledge of what is to be at the last. There may, therefore, be truth in these interpretations, without at all contravening the more obvious meaning, that the raising of the dead which even "now is," is the general resurrection at the last day.

"For as the Father hath life in Himself," life absolute and essential, not as in created beings arising from mere continuance by the laws of their nature, but in self-

existence¹; “*in like manner hath He given also to the Son to have life in Himself.*” Therefore there is unity of substance, as both having life in themselves; distinction of persons, as Father and Son; and very God of very God, for He only imparteth life who hath life in Himself; and no one imparteth life but God. And thus in this dispensation “the last Adam was made a quickening spirit².” “*And He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man,*” as Daniel saw in the night visions that He was one “like the Son of Man, who came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days³.”

“*Marvel not at this,*” as a thing incredible: “*for the hour cometh in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice.*” marvel not at what I say of the Son of Man giving life and executing judgment; for there shall be a resurrection of all the dead at His voice; or, in like manner, as St. Paul says, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead⁴?” Or it might be, that the expression “Marvel not at this,” applies to the healing of the paralytic; as just before it is said, “He will show Him greater things than these, that ye may marvel;” as if saying, these are not subjects of marvel compared with what shall be: and in a similar manner, on the next miracle in St. John, it is said, as if in the same Divine and sublime manner of deprecating wonder for such miracles, “I have done one work, and ye all marvel.”

“All in their graves shall hear His voice, *and shall come forth, they that have done good things to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil things to*

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

² Dan. vii. 13.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

⁴ Acts xxvi. 8.

*the resurrection of condemnation*⁵." "Then," says St. Augustin, "shall there be a division, and not such as is now. For now we are separated not by places, but by characters, affections, desires. For we live together with the wicked; the division is in secret, and in secret the separation: as the wheat in the threshing-floor, not in the barn. The separation shall be when they are stripped from the chaff: they are blended together till the winnowing comes. Then will there be an open separation. They who have done well shall go to live with the angels of God: they who have done ill to be tormented with the devil and his angels⁶."

The same writer, in a very striking manner, draws out a distinction, before noticed in this passage, between the former expression, where it is said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live," and this last place, where it is said, that at the Judgment "all shall come forth to the resurrection of life or condemnation." The former, which speaks of the resurrection which "now is," he considers to be the resurrection of the soul in this life by the power of "the Son of God" in His obedient children, in the same sense as it was before said of such that they have "passed from death unto life;" for it is there said, that "the dead" that hear His voice,—*"the voice of the Son of God,"*—shall live; they that hear and obey Him, and none else, they shall live by awaking to the true life which is in Him. But this last place he explains of the resurrection of the body at the last day; for it is "all that are in their graves shall hear His voice;" that is, the voice of the Son of Man, to whom is given to execute judgment,

⁵ John vii. 21; v. 29.

⁶ In Joan. Ev. Tr. xix. 18.

and "shall come forth," both just and unjust, with their bodies from the grave, but He says not, as in the former instance, "shall live." "Because He is the Son of Man," says St. Augustin, "He hath received power to execute judgment at the end of the world, and then shall be the resurrection of the bodies of the dead. Souls, therefore, doth God quicken through Christ, the Son of God: bodies doth God quicken through the same Christ, the Son of Man⁷." And again: "There is something which the Father doeth through the Son of Man, which He doeth not from that His substance to which the Son is equal; as His being born, being crucified, dying, rising again; for none of these things happened to the Father. So also the raising of bodies. For the resurrection of souls the Father effecteth from His own substance through the substance of the Son, in which He is equal to Him; inasmuch as souls are made partakers of that incommutable light, but not bodies; but the resurrection of bodies the Father effecteth through the Son of Man⁸."

SECTION IV

THE TESTIMONIES OF CHRIST

"I can do nothing of Myself: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; for I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." As before, "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do;" so here, again, "as I hear, I judge." St. Augustin, after explaining the resurrection of souls to be the work of God, and the resurrection of bodies

⁷ Tr. xix. 15.

⁸ In Joan. Tr. xxiii. 15.

and judgment to be by the Son of Man in subordination, as inferior to the Father, here observes, that the word "see" is used in the former case, and the expression "hear" in the latter, as indicating a command from the Father⁹. But in another place he explains both these terms of seeing and hearing as expressive of power derived from the Father, and identical with being, referring to the immutable and simple nature of the Sonship derived from the Father¹⁰. "I can do nothing;" for as it is impossible for God to lie, so is it impossible for either of the three Persons of the Godhead to act otherwise than in perfect union. But in this dispensation all is in subordination, as with Him who is the Apostle of the Father; and therefore, it is added, "the will of the Father which hath sent Me." Christ's will is spoken of as distinct from the Father's; as in that prayer, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

By seeking his own will, and not the will of God, man fell, and was judged, and died; but to Him who seeks not His own will, but that of the Father, there is judgment committed, and in Him is resurrection and life. Ever since the fall, all error is from self-love corrupting the judgment: all truth is in the love of God enlightening the heart; and hence, the Jews cannot believe because they seek their own honour. Add to which, it is the will of the Father which is especially brought forward in the judgment; thus it is said, "It is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father¹." The acceptance is, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father."

"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true;" yet, in another place, "Though I bear record of Myself,

⁹ In Joan. Tr. xxiii. 15.

¹⁰ Aur. Cat. ad loc.

¹ Matt. xx. 20.

yet My record is true²;" for He is indeed "the faithful and true witness³." St. Chrysostom thinks this is here spoken in answer to the thoughts of the unbelieving Jews; as indeed the contrary is expressed on the other occasion, in answer to their saying, "Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true." And the meaning here seems equivalent to that other expression, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not⁴." But in both cases it seems to be in allusion to the law, which, saying that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," implies, that the testimony of one witness alone is not admissible; and, of course, the whole does secretly intimate the doctrine of the Trinity⁵. If a discrepancy was found, there would not be truth; but there is a threefold Witness,—the Father by His works, the Spirit by prophecy, the Son by His words,—all speak together the legal testimony required; or, again, Christ by His own messenger whom He sent before Him, the Father by His voice, the Spirit by the Scriptures.

"There is another that beareth witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He beareth of Me is true." This, then, appears to mean what is afterwards more distinctly said: "The Father beareth witness of Me;" but as this witness was such as they would not acknowledge, the evidence of this the Father's bearing witness is given, viz. the authority of John, as it came before them, when they sent their solemn deputation of Priests and Levites to him; and yet, even this might appear but as human testimony, and, as such, is afterwards withdrawn. *"Ye yourselves sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I from man receive not*

² John viii. 14.

³ Rev. iii. 14. Jer. xlii. 5.

⁴ John x. 37.

⁵ See Study of Gospels, Pt. iii. § iv.

witness: but these things I say that ye may be saved." The messenger sent before His face came in legal righteousness, and pointed out to the Jews the Lamb of God; not that Christ needed such testimony, but it was for their sakes. "*He was the light that burneth and shineth; and ye were pleased for a while to rejoice in his light.*" As was said of his prototype, "Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp⁶." "John bare witness," says St. Augustin, "but as a lantern, not to satisfy friends, but to confound adversaries; for already had it been foretold in the person of the Father, 'I have ordained a lantern for Mine anointed. As for His enemies I shall clothe them with shame, but upon Himself shall His crown flourish⁷.' Situated in the night, thou hast seen, and wondered, and rejoiced at the light of the lamp; but that lamp speaks of the sun in whom thou oughtest to rejoice, and though it burns in the night, bids thee expect the day⁸." Burning with Divine love within, shining in a holy life for the benefit of others, such was the holy Baptist amid the gross darkness that surrounded him; while, with his loins girded and his lamp burning, he waited the coming of the Bridegroom, and rejoiced greatly to hear His voice.

"*But I have testimony greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the works themselves which I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.*" "Moses and John, prophets and apostles," says St. Augustin, "bear witness unto Christ; but beyond all these He places His own works⁹." "By their works ye shall know them," was His test of prophets; to His own works, therefore, He appeals. "*And the Father Him-*

⁶ Ecclus. xlvi. 1.

⁸ In Joan. Tr. xxiii.

⁷ Ps. cxxxii. 18, 19.

⁹ Ibid.

self which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me." It may be by His voice at our Lord's baptism; but perhaps it is rather to be taken as the truth suppressed, but implied through the whole of this discourse, and pervading it; for the works, and the Baptist, and the prophets, were all the Father's testimony. "*Neither have ye heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.*" They had said of old, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die¹." And in compassion to their request, God had raised up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto themselves; but unto Him, now that He is come, they will not hearken, and believe Him not; from whence it is clear that His Word by Moses has no abiding in them. For as God hath neither shape nor voice, He can only be spiritually discerned by the inner eye and ear which the Spirit gives; for He converses with man, not with outward organs, but by His Word, and this His Word they will not receive. "*And ye have not His Word abiding in you; for Him whom He hath sent ye believe not.*" "Abiding in you," or "abiding among you." It was outwardly fulfilled even now, when Christ, who is the Father's Word, could not abide among them at Jerusalem because of their unbelief; and it is a sign of what is spiritually fulfilled, when the Word, which is Christ, cannot abide in the hearts of men because of their unbelief.

"*Search the Scriptures,*" or, as it may be, and is sometimes rendered, "Ye search the Scriptures;" "*for ye think that in them ye have,*" or "ye think in them to have" "*eternal life.*" St. Chrysostom observes, that our Lord does not say, "Read the Scriptures," but "search;" implying careful study, as for hidden treasure, for the precious things of Scripture are not on the surface: and if in the things

¹ Exod. xx. 19. Deut. xviii. 16.

pertaining to this life nothing great can be attained in a mere perfunctory manner, much less in things spiritual which need so much greater attention². "*And they are they which testify of Me;*" they bid you come to Me, and find that life which ye think ye have in them. "*And yet ye are not willing to come unto Me that ye may have life.*" They choose death rather than life. The case of the Jews was like that of the paralytic; and Christ asked for nothing more of them than for their willingness to be made whole, but they would not. Such sweetness, such impressiveness, such sublime simplicity of grief and love, were never so expressed as in this discourse: "Full of grace are Thy lips, because God hath blessed Thee for ever!"

"*Honour, or glory which is from men I receive not; but I know you, that the love of God ye have not in yourselves.*" Your testimony I seek, not to do Me honour, but as the fruit of God's love within you; and this ye have not. The sun needs nothing from the light of a taper, but Christ needs the testimony of men for their own sakes. For why do they not attend to the Baptist—to his works—to the Scriptures? because they have not in them the love of God.

"*I have come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*" The awful depth of Christ's words, especially in St. John's Gospel, leads one to conclude that there is some mysterious prophecy in this expression. As Christ is emphatically "He that should come," so do we sometimes read of another "that shall come;" as St. John himself says, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit

² In Joan. Hom. xli.

of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come³.” “It is Antichrist he here alludes to,” says St. Chrysostom ; “and the coming ‘in his own name,’” he adds, “is the same as St. Paul describes him⁴, as ‘exalting himself above all that is called God or is worshipped,’ ‘showing himself that he is God.’” “And of the same Antichrist,” says St. Chrysostom, “St. Paul speaks prophetically, that God shall send on them a strong delusion, that they all may be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.” But Christ does not say “he shall come,” but “if he shall come,” still giving hope for repentance. St. Augustin also to the same effect, that it is Antichrist who is here spoken of; whom, he says, together with the other Fathers, that the Jews will especially receive, and fall into his snares⁵. For it is supposed that he will come of the tribe of Dan (as St. Augustin says), and that he will endeavour to restore the Law, and rebuild the Temple, and even submit to circumcision. Thus shall they “believe a lie” in Antichrist, “because they received not the love of the truth” in Christ. To receive one coming in his own name, without the marks of a Divine mission, is to fall into a snare of Antichrist.

“*How are ye able to believe who receive honour one of another, while the honour which cometh from God only ye seek not?*” as it is stated afterwards⁶, that the chief rulers would not confess Him, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. But here it seems to have a latent reference to the former expression, of one coming “in his own name,” in distinction from Him who comes in His Father’s name. For while men seek their own honour, they are prepared to receive him who comes

³ 1 John iv. 3.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 4.

⁵ See Maldonat.

⁶ John xii. 42, 43.

in his own name, and seeking his own honour; and, in like manner, having an eye to the glory of God will lead them to receive Christ. For they who deny themselves shall partake of the reproach of Christ, but "as long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." "If I yet pleased men," says St. Paul, "I should not be the servant of Christ⁷."

"Think not that I will accuse you unto the Father; there is one that accuseth you, Moses, on whom ye hope;" or in whom ye have trusted or hoped. "For if ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for concerning Me he wrote. But if his writings ye believe not, how will ye believe My words?" (John⁸.) On account of Moses they rejected Christ; whereas it is Moses himself who is thereby their accuser: it is Christ that entreats for them against Moses and against the Law, their accusers. For it was for the Sabbath of Moses they were contending now, to the rejection of the true Sabbath, of which theirs was but the shadow. As they thought they had eternal life in the Scriptures, but found it not there, not finding Christ, so they trusted in Moses, while Moses himself was their accuser, for they had not that "circumcision which is of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God⁹."

Since all this came upon them from seeking honour of men, and not that which cometh from God, how earnestly ought we to strive against this infirmity; not noticing it in others, but in ourselves, and praying to God to give us a heart to love Him alone; caring for nothing but to please Him.

⁷ Gal. i. 10.

⁸ See Luke xvi. 31.

⁹ Rom. ii. 29.

SECTION V

PLUCKING THE EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH-DAY

FROM the place which this circumstance occupies in St. Matthew's Gospel, it might have been supposed that it occurred later; but St. Mark and St. Luke both introduce it here; and the reason for St. Matthew's inserting it where he does, is very evident according to the general order of his narrative. For he is proceeding through this twelfth chapter to mention the growing violence of the Pharisees, of which this was one of the earliest indications,—in like manner as a continued connexion of subject is evident in the previous chapter also. St. Augustin, indeed, suggests that St. Matthew's may be the correct order, inasmuch as he says, "at that time," whereas the other two Evangelists specify no time at all; but still he allows that this term may be taken generally for the period at which many and divers circumstances occurred¹. But no clue is afforded in either of the Gospels to the country in which this takes place; whether in Judea, or in Galilee, or on their way from the former place to the latter. As it appears to have been about the time of one of the great festivals, it might well be supposed to be in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where our Lord was most likely to be at such a time, or in their return from thence; add to which, that St. Matthew, in the next circumstance, which appears to have been in a synagogue in Galilee "on another Sabbath," introduces it by mentioning a change of place, "when He was departed thence." On the other

¹ De Cons. Ev. lib. ii. 81.

hand, it must be allowed that the narrative of the first three Gospels is so confined to Galilee, that without some great reason, or express mention of the contrary, we usually suppose it to be there. If, again, without exactly defining the country in which it took place, we consider it to be on their returning from Jerusalem to Galilee, the time would, in this case, correspond with that in the previous year, when, on our Lord's returning from Judea into Galilee, "the fields" were already "white unto the harvest." The exact period of its occurrence is also uncertain, as there is no very decisive explanation of the meaning of the term by which it is defined in St. Luke's Gospel, by the *σαββάτῳ δευτεροπρώτῳ*, or "the second-first Sabbath." The most satisfactory account seems to be this: that the Sabbath which occurred during the Passover-week, was emphatically the First and Great Sabbath, and, as St. John terms it, "that Sabbath was an high day;" so the Pentecost being the next to the Passover in the order of festivals, it is natural to suppose that the Sabbath which occurred within the octave of that feast was a Sabbath next to the Great Sabbath,—“the second after the first,” or “the second prime Sabbath.” Thus the Pentecostal Sabbath was second to none but the Paschal Sabbath, that at the Feast of Tabernacles being the third. This is the opinion of Maldonatus, Hammond, Quesnel. But most commentators, both ancient and modern, take it to be a Sabbath at the Passover; either the first Sabbath after the second day of that festival, from which the Sabbaths to Pentecost are numbered; or the last day of that festival, on which day, as well as the first, there was to be an holy convocation². The point is not important, and makes no difference in a harmony, as there is no

² Lev. xxiii. 8. 15.

incident which finds a definite place between these two festivals, if the circumstances at the pool of Bethesda are, as we suppose, at the Passover.

“*Jesus at that time*” (Matt.), meaning it indefinitely at that season, for St. Matthew is going to mention many continuous instances of the enmity of the Pharisees as it now began to display itself. The other two Evangelists introduce it after the calling of Levi. “*And it came to pass that He*” (Mark, Luke) “*was going through the fields of corn*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*on the Sabbath-day*” (Matt., Mark); it was, indeed, a particular Sabbath-day, “*on the second-first Sabbath*” (Luke); “*and His disciples*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*were an hungred*” (Matt.), “*and began*” (Matt., Mark), “*as they went*” (adds St. Mark, for he always describes as one present), “*to pluck the ears of corn*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*and eat*” (Matt., Luke), “*rubbing them in their hands*” (Luke). For their poverty was very great, and they were once enjoined not to take any thing for their journeys,—so that they might, without rebuke, avail themselves of the privilege of the poor. For this the law had allowed: “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand³.” But, of course, their satisfying themselves in this manner indicated great need, and, as St. Jerome says, the austerities of a severe life. “Nature is satisfied with little,” says Bishop Wilson, “grace with less.” Thus were they supported, according to His promise, like the fowls of the air, which have neither storehouse nor barn; so that when He asked them at last whether they had needed any thing, when He had sent them forth unprovided, they answered that they had needed nothing. With gracious eyes of approbation,

³ Deut. xxiii. 25.

doubtless, did their Master look upon them in their poverty. Strange was the sight,—the Maker of all things in great want, together with His chosen! As Elijah fasted in the wilderness for forty days, while he called a famine on the land of Israel, tasting himself, as St. Ephraim says, of the cup that he had prepared for others; so now, they who were to teach poverty of spirit, were themselves exercised in what they taught. There was something then in that golden dream of poets, of men living without care on the spontaneous fruits of the earth; for it is found in Christ's first beatitude of the poor in spirit, whom, because they have neither storehouse nor barn, their heavenly Father sustains.

"*But (certain of,*" Luke) "*the Pharisees*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*when they saw it*" (Matt.), "*said unto Him, Behold*" (Matt., Mark), "*Thy disciples do*" (Matt.), or "*why do they do, on the Sabbath-day, what is not lawful?*" (Mark)—or, perhaps, half-addressing the disciples, and thus obliquely putting the question to their Master, whom they beheld, as it were, in a mirror in His own disciples:—"they said unto them, *Why do ye do*" (Luke) "*what it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day?*" (Matt., Luke). "*And Jesus answered*" (Luke), "*and He*" (Mark) "*said unto them*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*Have ye not*" (Matt., Luke), "*have ye never*" (Mark) "*read (this,*" Luke) "*what David did, when he (had need and,*" Mark) "*was an hungred, he and they that were with him? How he entered into the house of God*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*in the days of Abiathar the high priest*" (Mark), "*and took*" (Luke) "*and eat the shew-bread*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*and gave also unto those that were with him*" (Mark, Luke), "*which it is not lawful to eat*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*neither for him, nor for those that were with him*" (Matt.), "*save for the priests*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*alone*" (Matt., Luke).

The house of God here spoken of, was not, of course, the Temple, which was not then built, nor the Ark, but the Tabernacle. It appears in the Old Testament, that David was alone, whereas here his companions are mentioned; but it is easily explained, for on that occasion David spoke of the young men that were with him, who were to be partakers of the bread; and two of the Evangelists here say that he gave to those that were with him,—not that they received it from the priest together with him. And there was, perhaps, mysterious prophecy in this very circumstance; for it is Christ who now gives to those that are with Him, as David did, not they that take of themselves. The Law concerning it was, that the priests “shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made;” “but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy⁴;” the “twelve cakes” of “fine flour” set “upon the pure table before the Lord;” “and it shall be Aaron’s and his sons; and they shall eat it in the holy place⁵.” Thus David, “the man after God’s own heart,” had pointed out the right keeping of the Law, in that mercy is better than sacrifice. And wonderful things are contained in this mysterious allusion; for shall not He who gives up His only Son for the true Bread of our souls, give up also the shadow, or the shew-bread, which was set apart for Him, for the need of our bodies; and if so, shall not His Sabbath also bend in mercy to the needs of His faithful servants, who had given up all for Him? And, indeed, to fast and be hungry for the sake of Christ and men’s souls, was in itself a species of sacrifice of all the most pleasing to God; and for such, therefore, the Sabbath might well yield. The prophet Isaiah had before warned them against keeping the Sabbaths for envy and

⁴ Exod. xxix. 33.

⁵ Levit. xxiv. 5. 9.

debate, and added, "but if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity;—and the Lord shall guide thee continually⁶."

And St. Matthew, writing as a Hebrew to Hebrews, adds, "*Or have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath-days the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the Temple;*" or, as some Greek readings would imply in the neuter, "something greater." If the former instance of David transgressing the Law out of necessity is not sufficient, does not the Law itself indicate the continual yielding of the Sabbath to another command? For it is commanded that there should be sacrificed "on the Sabbath-day two lambs⁷," and the shew-bread was set out on the Sabbath⁸. In this instance, the persons, the time, the place, are all holy; the Priests, the Sabbath, the Temple; but here it was Christ, the High Priest of good things to come, the Sabbath of His kingdom, and His presence. If the figurative Temple could hallow or make lawful, how much more the true spiritual Temple, which is Christ? "*But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless*" (Matt.). Having disclosed to them something of His incomprehensible dignity, "He quickly draws a veil over it," says St. Chrysostom, "giving His discourse, as before, a lenient turn." Thus does He ever turn His instruction to loving-kindness; for love is light, and leads to the knowledge of God.

But still, after all that can be said of love being the true understanding of the Law, yet a difficulty remains; for if a man was put to death for gathering sticks on the

⁶ Isa. lviii. 10, 11.

⁷ Numb. xxviii. 9.

⁸ Levit. xxiv. 8.

Sabbath-day^o, why are they not to be condemned for plucking corn? and if carrying a burden was prohibited by the Law, is he altogether justifiable who carries his bed¹? Therefore our Lord's concluding words intimate that this is indeed the bringing in of a new Law, and a setting aside of the old, by His own power as the Son of Man. The Sabbatical Law had formerly restrained man for his good; but now, for the good of man, will restrain him no longer, but give way to a better Law. And, indeed, this was intimated in the former statement; for it was not to any persons when hungry, but to David, the anointed of God, to whom the shew-bread was given: nor was it without discrimination, but to them found on inquiry "pure from women;" nor was it to any service but to that in the Temple to which the Sabbath yielded; nor was it now all that would be justified, but the disciples of Christ, whose service is then perfect freedom when it is actuated by His love. But the law of "mercy and not sacrifice" is very extensive, and a key to character. "Multiplying external sacrifices," says Quesnel, "is no proof of progress in holiness, but proficiency in mercy is always so." "*And He said unto them*" (Mark, Luke), "*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*" (Mark); which is indicated in the very terms of the Commandment, that the Sabbath was blessed and hallowed for the rest of man, and of all that belonged to him. "*Wherefore*" (Matt.), "*so that*" (Mark) "*the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). He made the Sabbath, and He can annul it: He made it for the sake of man, and for the sake of man He may abrogate the same. These Pharisees thought that they had in their hands, as St. Hilary says, "the key of heaven²." But they had it

^o Numb. xv. 35.

¹ Nehem. xiii. 19.

² In Matt. xii. 3.

not; for it was love, and it was to this that our Lord would lead them; and for this purpose He turned their attention to things which, under the guise of facts, contained, indeed, prophecies of the kingdom, where God would work our salvation, not by sacrifices of the Law, but by His own free mercy; and from henceforth required not legal observance, but the free sacrifice of men's souls in continual acts of mercy and thanksgiving. Thus did He gradually lead them to His own better Sabbath of love and mercy; for it was needless, as St. Chrysostom says, "that they should make one day a festival who are commanded to keep a feast all their life long, by holding in all things communion with Him. Lo! now, why is any Sabbath required by him who is always keeping the feast, whose conversation is in heaven³?"

SECTION VI

THE WITHERED HAND HEALED ON THE SABBATH

WE now come to a third successive instance of the Pharisees accusing for the breach of the Sabbath at the beginning of the second year. "*And it came to pass on another Sabbath*" (Luke). Were it not for this mention in St. Luke of its being another Sabbath, one might have been inclined, from the words of St. Matthew, to have supposed it the same, so usual is it with this Evangelist to pursue a secret order and connexion, but not that of time; for after the last incident he proceeds, "*And having departed from thence*" (Matt.), "*He entered into their synagogue*" (Matt., Luke).

³ In Matt. Hom. xxxix. 3. See Study of Gospels, Pt. iii. § vii.

But St. Mark says, "*And He again entered the synagogue ;*" where the expression "again" and "the" synagogue might lead one to think that St. Mark spoke with some reference to what had before taken place in that synagogue, and therefore implying the synagogue which was familiar to St. Peter, being that of Capernaum, and in which He had previously wrought a remarkable miracle in the case of the demoniac. The mention also of the Herodians, and of retiring afterwards to the sea-side from thence, confirms this inference, that it was at Capernaum. He had entered, "*and was teaching*" (Luke). "*And (behold,*" Matt.) "*there was a man*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*there*" (Mark, Luke) "*having his hand withered*" (Matt., Mark), "*and his right hand,*" says St. Luke, "*was withered*" (Luke). St. Jerome, on this place, mentions, that in the Gospel of the Nazarenes, this man is said to have been a mason; and that he implored Christ's mercy more especially on that plea, for his destitute and helpless condition, as being unable to work for his livelihood. "*And they*" (Mark), "*the Scribes and Pharisees*" (Luke), "*were watching Him*" (Mark, Luke) obliquely, and with evil intent, as the word indicates, "*like as a lion that is greedy of his prey,*" as the Psalmist describes them; "*whether on the Sabbath He would heal him*" (Mark, Luke). "*that they might accuse Him*" (Mark), "*that they might find accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts*" (Luke). As wild beasts first attack the inferior creatures that attend on man, and at length draw more and more near in their approaches on man himself, the object of their fear, so these were becoming more and more emboldened in their fierceness to attack God Himself: first of all, the man that carried his bed they found fault with, then the disciples in the field, and now the Lord Himself. Such are they whom He has to sustain, as St. Bernard says,

“watchers on His actions, cavillers at His words, mockers at His sufferings.”

“*And He said unto the man who had the withered hand, Rise up (and stand forth,*” Luke) “*in the midst*” (Mark, Luke); thinking thereby to move their compassion, by bringing the need of mercy more palpably before them, and also the subsequent proof of His own miraculous power. “*And he arose, and stood forth*” (Luke). Until now they were probably silent, as this seems to be intimated by St. Luke’s saying, that “He knew their thoughts:” it is therefore at this time that we may take up St. Matthew’s part of the narrative, and suppose that now “*they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? in order that they might accuse Him*” (Matt.). “*And He saith unto them*” (Mark), in answer, perhaps, to this inquiry which St. Matthew mentions: “*Jesus therefore said unto them, I will ask you somewhat*” (Luke): “*Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?*” (Mark, Luke.) According to the idiom of the original, the expression implies a comparison, Which is the most lawful of the two, to do good or to do evil? “*But they were silent*” (Mark).

The very picture itself presented before us in these words is striking and wonderful: the maimed cripple looking for mercy; the love of the Son of Man yearning over him; the Pharisees eyeing askant, with murderous intent, unrelenting; the people earnestly gazing, yet chilled and awed by the presence of the Pharisees, to whose opinion they bowed; while the Searcher of hearts already, by that comparison of giving life or destroying, disclosed His knowledge of their intent.

“*But,*” desirous to press more closely home to them this compassionate appeal, “*He said unto them, What man shall*

there be among you who shall have one sheep, and if this shall fall on the Sabbath-day into a pit, will not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" Our Lord says emphatically, "shall have one sheep;" and in the parable the shepherd has lost one sheep, and that one more dear to him than the ninety-and-nine; and it is one piece of money that the woman has lost; for thus is each one to Him esteemed alone as the one and only object of His care, "as the apple of His eye." It is as if He had said, What one sheep is to any of you that has but one—and He well knew their covetousness—such is to Me one among mankind. And thus the blessed angels, who are ever at rest in the Sabbath of God, yet seek the lost sheep, and rejoice over it when found, as if among innumerable worlds, which they survey, one lost sheep on earth was dearer than all. There is also a singular tenderness for mankind expressed in the emphatic words that follow: "*How much then is a man better than a sheep?*" As the Son of Man, He exalts His loving-kindness to mankind in a comparison with the other creatures of His care; in like manner as when speaking of the fowls of the air, He adds, "Are ye not much better than they?" But where covetousness reigns, the life of man is esteemed of little worth.

"Wherefore,"—for you may yourselves answer this question you have put to Me,—"*Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-day*" (Matt.). The very object of the Sabbath was mercy, and included in its command of mercy the very beasts; how much more did it intimate mercy to man made in the image of God? Is it lawful to do for self-interest what it is not lawful to do for the love of God and man?

"*And having looked round upon them*" (Mark, Luke), "*all*" (Luke) "*with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their*

heart" (Mark), "He looked upon them," says St. Chrysostom, "while He asked the question, that by His very eye He might win them over⁴;" looked upon them with those eyes which, the Psalmist says, "consider the poor, and those eyelids that try the children of men⁵." He looked upon them "all" with anger mixed with deep pity and concern; for the last touching appeal respecting the fallen sheep was probably addressed to all present, as well as the Pharisees, whom He usually refers to the Scriptures and the Law; and thus looking upon them, He paused for better feelings; and then, by performance of the cure, He calls in God Himself, as it were, to bear witness to the true keeping of His own Law; for God would not bear witness to Him by so Divine a miracle, were He not keeping His own Sabbath. Looking forth, therefore, upon them, "*He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*And he did so*" (Luke), "*and he stretched it forth*" (Matt., Mark), "*and it was restored*" (Matt.), "*and his hand was restored*" (Mark, Luke), "*whole as the other*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "The right hand," says Bede, "which was stretched forth to the forbidden fruit in Adam, was withered and dried up, but through the innocent hands which were stretched forth on the cross in the Son of Man, it has been restored to him whole." And now, to take the thought of St. Ambrose, "the right hand must be stretched forth according to Christ's command, that it may be made whole; it must be stretched forth in giving of alms, in defending our neighbour, in protecting the widow, in prayer for pardon to God⁶." Thus, that which has been by sin paralysed, like the hand of Jeroboam that sacrificed to idols, shall, by the grace of Christ, be restored, as his was when he prayed.

⁴ Hom. in Matt.

⁵ Ps. xi. 5.

⁶ In Luc. lib. v. 40.

Christ commands and gives the strength, but the will must co-operate in us. Thus the withered and dried branch may again partake of the sap of the vine, and abide in Christ.

But how much more difficult is the healing of the soul than that of the body? For His object, no doubt, was to restore their withered souls, as much as to restore the limb of the poor man; but they were rendered worse by His healing; and the things that should have been to their wealth, were unto them an occasion of a heavier fall. "*And they were filled with madness, and talked one with another what they might do to Jesus*" (Luke). Such is St. Luke's account as writing for Gentiles; but St. Mark tells us who the parties were that were thus conspiring. "*And the Pharisees having gone forth*" (Matt., Mark) "*straightway together with the Herodians*" (Mark), "*took counsel against Him, how they might put Him to death*" (Matt., Mark). The Pharisees, perhaps, from Jerusalem, combining with the government party in Galilee, or the fierce religionists with the State party, forgetting their former enmities with each other. The case is remarkable after the former; for on that occasion their violence is not so intense, where no indication of Divine holiness and power is made; but witnessing or hearing of a miracle, as on the raising of Lazarus from the grave, exasperates into a stronger hatred and envy at the good of others. His life had before been attempted at Nazareth in a popular fury, and the Pharisees had once before endeavoured to kill Him on the late occasion at Jerusalem; which renders it probable that these were the same persons pursuing Him to Galilee, or emissaries from them. But here it is with design and taking counsel. "They that lay wait for my soul take their counsel together." "Thus have they

rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my good-will⁸." The attempt of Herod the king at Bethlehem; the populace at Nazareth; the Pharisees now conspiring together with the Herodians; all these purposes of destruction were already prophetic of the circumstances of His death, and the combination of those that accompanied it. Thus often in the evil heart of man, first one passion, then another, then all, even the most opposite, will combine against Christ.

SECTION VII

CHRIST RETIRES TOWARDS THE SEA

BUT the crown which one rejects shall be set on the head of another: and the fall of the Jews shall be the riches of the Gentiles, as it now more distinctly follows. "*But Jesus*" (Matt., Mark), "*when He perceived it,*"—not from outward indications, but from His knowledge of their thoughts,—when He was aware of this their secret conspiracy among themselves, He "*retired from thence*" (Matt.),—"*retired together with His disciples,*" adds the Evangelist of St. Peter, and mentions the place, "*to the sea-side*" (Mark). Some months before this⁹ we find Him retiring to the deserts, probably among the mountains at the back of Capernaum, in order to pray and be alone; but now it is to the western shores of the lake, perhaps to invite the people to Him and for the safety which the sea afforded, and probably this had already become to Him a place of teaching; for St. Mark mentioned at the time that Levi was called, that He was then "*again*" retiring to the sea and teaching the people there. "*And*

⁸ Ps. cix. 4.

⁹ Mark i. 45. Luke v. 16.

great multitudes followed Him" (Matt.); not from Capernaum or Galilee alone, as appears from St. Mark's account: "*And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan. And they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He was doing, came unto Him*" (Mark). Whether this was the first occasion of so many flocking to Him from the Gentile countries seems uncertain, and will depend very much on whether we consider the Sermon on the Mount as the same with St. Luke's Sermon on the Plain, which now ensues, or not; for St. Matthew had described a similar crowd of Gentiles as composing the mixed multitude which attended Him previous to the Sermon on the Mount; apparently from the same surrounding regions, with the exception, perhaps, of Idumæa, which St. Matthew does not mention at that time, unless the words "from beyond Jordan" are intended to include it. But nothing can be argued from so slight an omission. In the former occasion also (if not the same as this) St. Matthew describes many diseases of all kinds as healed: and now it is evident that a great many miracles were wrought, but of which no distinct mention occurs, of which St. Matthew at this time speaks strongly in a few words; for, mentioning the multitudes, he adds, "*And He healed them all.*" And St. Mark, of the strangers that came to Him from having heard of His great miracles, gives this very interesting account; St. Peter himself probably being the person to whom our Lord spake, and whose boat was brought:—"And He spake to His disciples, that a small vessel should wait on Him, on account of the multitude, that they might not throng Him; for He healed many, insomuch that they pressed," or kept falling, "upon

Him, that they might touch Him, as many as had plagues" (Mark). Thus a little later than this St. Luke mentions that "the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all¹;" an expression remarkably similar to what St. Matthew here uses, that "He healed them all;" as if all that approached were somehow benefited. It is also to be remarked, that the "touching" Him with an express purpose seems a distinct circumstance from that of the thronging and pressing of the multitude; in the same manner as it was shown in the instance of the woman touching the hem of His garment, and who was signalled out for so doing in distinction from the crowd that thronged Him. His power to heal was infinite; but that virtue went forth from Him according to the faith of the recipient. While the learned behold His miracles, and persecute Him; the ignorant and unlearned are following Him in faith and love, press out, as it were, from Him the abundance of His blessings, and the meek take by violence the riches of His kingdom.

Among these diseases that new and extraordinary circumstance in the history of mankind comes forth palpably to light,—the sensible indication of evil spirits possessing the bodies of men, as they are found during the time of our Lord's ministry: "*And the unclean spirits,*"—St. Mark speaks of it with the article, as if these appearances were a familiar phenomenon,—"*the unclean spirits, when they beheld Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God*" (Mark). The demoniac before in the synagogue had said, "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God." In comparing St. Matthew and St. Mark together, we often find that the

¹ Luke vi. 19.

latter uses the expressions of the former, but in a different sense or with a different application, from a slight change; and here it is very remarkable: St. Mark seems to apply expressly to those evil spirits the words which, in St. Matthew, appear to be spoken of persons whose diseases He healed; for, in speaking of "healing them" all, St. Matthew adds, "*And He charged them that they should not make Him known.*" But St. Mark, in the parallel passage here, speaking of the unclean spirits, adds, "*And He greatly charged them that they should not make Him known.*" It may have been true generally of all whom He healed, as St. Matthew seems at first sight to intimate, that He charged them not to make Him known; but yet one would think that more particularly the words apply, as St. Mark supplies the comment, to the evil spirits. And it is to be observed, that in the former instance of healing the demoniac in the synagogue, St. Matthew had used the same expression of the evil spirit, "He charged him that he should hold his peace." And it appears in both instances to apply to their acknowledgment of His Divinity; whether a constraining terror at His presence forced the confession from them, or whether it was that whatever reason induced our Lord to conceal it operated also with the evil ones in a desire to disclose it. At all events, this circumstance in our Lord's conduct, in thus withdrawing the manifestation of Himself, was an instance of His meekness and forbearance, when "one rough word" might have destroyed them, or any disclosure of the brightness of His Presence; for to this St. Matthew adds, "*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Behold, My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved in Whom My Soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall*

show judgment to the Gentiles" (Matt.). St. Matthew, indeed, who now quotes this, had made no allusion to the Gentiles as now following Him, to which the passage refers; but St. Mark, at this very place, supplies this by mentioning that He was at this time attended by a great multitude of Idumeans, Sidonians, and Syrians. "*He shall not strive nor cry,*" but be even to the last as a sheep dumb before her shearers; "*neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets.*" For in the broad way that leadeth unto destruction, says St. Jerome, His voice is not heard by the many that travel therein². "*A bruised reed shall He not break;*" for a reed, as a sceptre in His right hand, shall set forth the meekness of His kingdom; a weak believer ready to fall shall He tenderly deal with, and not force to extremity. "Wilt thou break a leaf," says Job, "driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble³?" "*And the smoking flax shall He not quench:*" wherever any light is still left in the conscience it shall not be smothered by Him in this His dispensation of mercy; "*until He send forth the judgment unto victory,*" as He did at last on the impenitent Jews after His Spirit had pleaded with them and been rejected. "*And in His Name shall the Gentiles trust*" (Matt.), shall the nations hope.

The expression from the Prophet may be taken generally, that a sinner bending under a heavy weight is as a bruised reed, and a weak spark of faith in a little one is as the smoking flax: the tender dealing with these marks the Son of Man, says St. Jerome; for He came to save that which was lost; and, we may add, the same marks also those that are of His Spirit. But St. Augustin applies it to His Jewish persecutors⁴, and St.

² In Matt. ad loc.

³ Job xiii. 25.

⁴ De Civ. Dei, lxx. c. 30.

Chrysostom likewise: that though His power was such as might break them as a reed, and quench their rage as a spark, yet in His mercy He forbore. But St. Hilary applies it both to the Gentile and Jew: that the Gentile He broke not, though they were as the bruised reed; and that there still remained in Israel a spark of that ancient grace, that the Spirit is not taken from them, and that it may still break forth into flame in the day of their repentance. But the period for that repentance is prescribed; it is "until He sends forth judgment," i. e. says St. Hilary, when the power of death shall be taken away, and He shall bring in judgment with the return of His brightness⁵.

Enough is it for us that it is even now as it then was: His Voice is not heard in the streets; in the broad way, which is the way of this world, His still and small Voice is not heard; in solitude and stillness we must wait for it, and listen attentively to hear it, and when we have heard, be careful that we be not carried away by noise of our own passions, and so hear no more that still and small Voice; remembering that this His gentle dealing and forbearance is but for a time, and until He sends forth judgment unto victory; and that as it is now already in type and sign fulfilled in the temporal Israel, and the consequence brought about that in Him the Gentiles trust, so will it be also fully accomplished in the end, when He shall no longer plead with man.

In the meanwhile we are walking on the shore, and He is among us, and we hear His teaching and see His works; on the shore of that mighty sea of eternity whose waves even now break nearer and nearer at our feet.

⁵ In Matt. xii, 10.

SECTION VIII

ELECTION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

IN order to have a clear view of the whole subject; as it arises in a Harmony of the Gospels, we must notice the distinct order in which the various callings of the Apostles take place. They are first of all gradually introduced to the knowledge of Christ, as is related of some of them, on the banks of the Jordan, by John the Baptist; they continue with Him, and baptize in His Name; they are afterwards called once, and probably twice, to relinquish all things for His service on the sea-side; and Matthew from the receipt of custom. But they are now selected out of the whole number of the disciples to become His Apostles, and a chosen "Twelve," by which name after this period they are frequently designated by the three Evangelists. Yet they still continued with Him for a time, and are afterwards formally sent forth; their mission is again on other occasions given, as it were, anew, and confirmed with greater degrees of fulness and efficacy, as at the Resurrection and on the day of Pentecost. This their ordination is not at all mentioned by St. Matthew; but he introduces the names of the Twelve as they are here given in connexion with their subsequent mission, pre-facing it with that very touching account similar to what St. Luke records on sending forth the Seventy: that, "seeing the multitudes as sheep without a shepherd, He had compassion on them, and exhorted His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth

labourers into His harvest:" an account which seems very much to bear on the present occasion; for it was, as it were, in pitiful constraint from the overwhelming multitudes that He now appoints the Apostles; although not preceding it by an express exhortation for the prayers of others, yet Himself setting the example of those prayers previous to Ordination, which have ever since been continued, as we find in the Acts of the Apostles and Ember Weeks of the Church.

"And it came to pass in those days He went forth to the mountain to pray, and was continuing all night in prayer to God" (Luke), or in the house of prayer; but the expression occurs in St. Matthew in the former sense, "whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer⁶." "The mountain" here spoken of is supposed by some to be Mount Tabor; it was probably the Mount of the Beatitudes to which He had thus retired, or some mountain near Capernaum which He frequented for this purpose; for St. Mark mentioned before that He retired to desert places to pray, and came "after some days," or, as it might be rendered, "during the days," to Capernaum⁷. Thus praying, not as weak and needing aid, but as merciful and lowly, He sets us the example of prayer: of prayer before every solemn act; of prayer in secret, for it was in the mountain; of perseverance in prayer, for He continued all night. On the mountain—in solitude—at night! He who would converse with God in prayer must arise into that stillness where God is, and while the tumult ceases from without, in the retirement of the mind, by internal desires commune with God in silence; leaving human consolations behind, and pressing forward to the things that are above. Night is the season

⁶ Τῆ προσευχῆ, Matt. xxi. 22.

⁷ Mark ii. 1.

for prayer and for tears of repentance: he who is not refreshed by that nightly dew, is withered and dried up in the day by the sun of temptation ⁸.

“*And when it was day He called unto Him His disciples*” (Luke). But St. Mark, without mentioning the night in prayer, “*And He goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would*” (Mark); an expression more indefinite than that of the disciples; and from the two accounts together it is evident that they were more in number than the Twelve, and that, as in the case of Barnabas and Matthias, there was a selection made. As among Christians generally; first there is a calling, then election: “many are called, few chosen.” He called them up into the mount as God had called Moses; the terms themselves indicate the calling of God to a place above the world; they who would partake of the Sacerdotal character, must first ascend into the mountain apart at the call of God. The expression, too, “He called whom He would” and He “chose,” is remarkable, as indicating that “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God⁹;” and “ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you¹⁰.” Further, it is to be observed, that Christ prays as Man, but chooses as God; and therefore the Apostles pray at the filling up the place of Judas, but choose by lot, leaving the choice to God.

“*And they came unto Him*” (Mark): He called, and they came; man must co-operate with God: “*and out of them He chose Twelve*” (Luke); “*and He appointed Twelve, that they might be with Him*” (Mark); for the double purpose, first of all to attend on Him, and afterwards to proceed on that mission which is some time later ex-

⁸ Vita Christi, p. 140.

⁹ Heb. v. 4.

¹⁰ John xv. 16.

pressly given in the very terms here stated by St. Mark : “and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to heal diseases, and to cast out devils” (Mark). By the term “preaching,” Quesnel observes, “all ecclesiastical functions are denoted¹ ;” all things, in short, that proclaim the kingdom, to bear in all their ministrations as heralds the remission of sins. Healing of diseases was also a preaching of the Gospel ; as was likewise the casting out of devils.

“Whom also He named Apostles” (Luke). On the term “Apostles” Bishop Wilson says, “So Jesus Christ called the Twelve ; that the world might know from Whom they had their mission, and that such as are not sent by Him, and by those that have their powers from Him, are not His Apostles.” And Quesnel, “Christ would have His first ministers bear the name of Apostles, or envoys, to the end their mission might be as well known as their very name ; and that all the world might be convinced, that there is no true mission in the Church besides that which resides in their successors².” “For how can they preach,” says St. Paul, “unless they be sent³ ?” And with reference to the same expression our Lord Himself, exalting missions to an infinite dignity, “As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you⁴.”

But why are they emphatically Twelve in number ? It is not that the Apostles and the Twelve are commensurate terms ; for the Apostles were more than Twelve, as St. Paul and Barnabas were Apostles, but not of the Twelve ; but there was a pre-eminence in the number Twelve, so that it was needful to be signally preserved by the appointment of Matthias in the

¹ On St. Mark.

² Rom. x. 15.

³ On St. Luke.

⁴ John xx. 21.

place of Judas ; having, no doubt, within it some deep and extensive spiritual signification. The number Twelve, says Augustin, is a great sacrament signifying universality⁵. For the world is divided into four parts, and is to be baptized in the name of the Blessed Trinity ; and Three multiplying four becomes Twelve⁶. This therefore is the Church taken out of the world. Hence the Twelve is sometimes expressed by the Four multiplied by the Three, as in the stones on the breast of the High Priest, being three in four rows⁷ : and the Twelve gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem, on which are “the names of the twelve tribes” are described in the same manner : it is said, “on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates⁸.” For this indicates the coming of men from the four quarters of the world into the doctrine of the Trinity ; and thus at the last the number of the redeemed is expressed by multiples of twelve. So the Law is not abrogated, but extended in the Twelve ;—issuing from the twelve tribes, represented by them, and setting forth in various senses the spiritual Israel, as it has been thus described by Ludolphus. They are the twelve Patriarchs, by whom all Christian people are begotten in a spiritual new birth ; they are the twelve living Fountains in Elim, watering with their doctrines the Church and the world ; they are the twelve stones on the breast of the High Priest, adorning the Church by holy examples ; they are the twelve Loaves of the shew-bread set on the table, refreshing souls by the Word of life ; they are the twelve Princes of the tribes, promulgating precepts of salvation, and governing the Church ; they are the twelve Spies

⁵ In Ps. lxxxv. 4.

⁷ Exod. xxviii 17, 21.

⁶ In Ps. ciii.

⁸ Rev. xxi. 13.

who explore the land of promise, inquiring into the future state by contemplation, and afterwards making known the same to the devout; they are the twelve Stones taken from Jordan, by despising and setting at nought the flux of this world; they are the twelve Stones of the Altar, bearing in themselves the sacrifice of Christ; they are the twelve young bullocks slain unto the Lord, sustaining martyrdom for Christ's sake; they are the twelve oxen under the brazen sea, preaching and administering the grace of Baptism; they are the twelve lions beneath the throne of Solomon, overcoming the tyrants of this world, and alarming the obstinate by threatening the pains of hell; they are the twelve Prophets, warning the Church respecting the time to come; they are the twelve Hours of the day, ordering the times and seasons of the Christian life; they are the twelve gates of the City, by the power of the keys opening the kingdom of Heaven; they are the twelve foundations of that City, sustaining the Church by their good deeds and prayers; they are the twelve stones on the crown of the Bride, enlightening the Church with doctrines and miracles⁹. In short, as Tertullian says, in speaking of the twelve fountains at Elim and the twelve stones from the Jordan, "So many Apostles were presignified, thenceforth as fountains and streams about to water the world of the Gentiles, which had been dried up and left destitute of knowledge¹." Therefore, with a wonderful adaptation and harmonious fitness, is the Church set forth by the Apostles as the spiritual City built on the Twelve.

Why this period should be chosen for the appointment is not quite evident; but it appears to be on the great

⁹ Vita Christi, p. 140.

¹ Lib. adv. Marc. 4. See Study of Gospels. p. 210.

press of the multitude in order to meet their immediate want, and after His teaching by the lake when so much sought for: perhaps, moreover, it may have had this hidden fitness, that at this time His rejection on the part of the Jews was becoming more manifest, and He was turning in consequence to the Gentiles. For on the Twelve the Church throughout the whole world is now to be built in distinction from Israel, which was a figure of the same. It was therefore the Glory departing from the earthly Jerusalem, and the coming down of the Heavenly Jerusalem from on high, as St. John now beheld, having "twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels," and having the "names written thereon of the twelve tribes."

"But of the twelve Apostles the names are these" (Matt.). As the Apostles are here all placed in a certain order, it is natural to suppose that this order was observed in their consecration, and that our Lord did thus successively summon and ordain each, giving the pre-eminence to St. Peter; and that He continued to observe in some measure the same order of precedence, according to St. Paul's expression, "Let all things be done decently and in order." But, at the same time, while there are strong indications of order and design as the general rule, yet it is not so exactly preserved as for us to suppose that the precise position of each as here given is important; for there is a slight variation in the order: St. Luke makes a change both here and in the Acts. "*First Simon who is called Peter*" (Matt.); "*and Simon He surnamed Peter*" (Mark); "*Simon, whom also He named Peter*" (Luke). As there are callings at different times, with different degrees of fulness, so is the addition of this name. St. John records the expression, when St. Peter was for the

first time brought to Christ, "Thou shalt be called Cephas²;" St. Matthew, on St. Peter's great confession, a year later than this time, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build My Church:" and on this occasion St. Mark and St. Luke. But it seems probable that the name was now given; for St. John, on the previous occasion, speaks by anticipation and prospectively, "Thou shalt be called;" St. Matthew, afterwards, of the name as already given; but here as if it were first bestowed. And it is observed, that before this time St. Mark and St. Luke speak of him as Simon, but after this as Peter: five times by St. Mark, and eight times by St. Luke, is he called Simon before this; but mentioned by both afterwards as often as eighteen times by the name of Peter. And St. Matthew, who before this uses both names indifferently, after this speaks of him as Peter. In all places where the names are given, St. Peter is the first; and in St. Matthew it is expressly stated, "First Simon Peter:" but it is always Peter in conjunction with the others both in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles; and it is remarkable that when he is separated from them or going forth beyond them, it becomes to him an occasion of falling.

"*And Andrew his brother*" (Matt., Luke), but here omitted by St. Mark. "*And James*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*the son of Zebedee*" (Matt., Mark), "*and John*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*his brother*" (Matt.), "*the brother of James*" (Mark). Notwithstanding the very high distinction of St. John, he is placed after his brother, nor would his age account for this pre-eminence, if older than St. John; for St. Peter is always put before his elder brother St. Andrew. St. Chrysostom mentions this as a proof that our Lord

² See The Nativity, p. 234.

does not place them according to their dignity, as St. John appears to him the greater. There appears no reason to suppose that they were ranked according to their real worth, which the final judgment alone will reveal, but according to their fitness and adaptation for that pre-eminence or position in the Church, as known to Him Who is no respecter of persons. "*And He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder*" (Mark); a mysterious name, bearing on it that stamp of contradiction to first worldly impressions which is so frequent in Scripture; for to all human appearances it could be little supposed that meek characters such as these could overcome the world and convert it: in the ardent disposition of St. Peter it was not so. The temper of these, which was that of Divine love, has within it a power beyond all the world, being like the Voice of God itself: they were truly Sons of thunder; for the great power of God's Voice is in love. From Sinai the Voice of God was heard in thunder, but now more powerfully in the love of the Son of Man: "Him that speaketh from Heaven: Whose Voice then shook the earth³." "The thunder of His power who can understand⁴?" for it is love. The Voice from Heaven, of which some "said it thundered," spake of love; and that they heard and recorded as sons of thunder.

"*And Andrew*" (Mark): on account of the pre-eminence of the other three, mentioned the fourth by St. Mark: but probably he was put in pair with St. Peter, if not now, yet afterwards when they were sent forth by two and two on their mission; for this Evangelist still further shows, as he proceeds, that he is not placing them two and two; for the other two Evangelists, by alternately

³ Heb. xii. 25, 26.

⁴ Job xxvi. 14.

omitting the conjunctive particle "and," give the names in pairs; but in St. Mark this distinction is not marked, as he prefixes "and" before each alike. "*And*" (Mark) "*Philip and Bartholomew*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), the son of Tolmai, which, being a patronymic, makes it the more probable that he had the other name Nathanael as designated by John, like Simon Barjonas. "*And*" (Mark) "*Matthew and Thomas*" (Mark, Luke), but the Evangelist putting himself last, and with the appellation of reproach which he bore; "*Thomas and Matthew the Publican*" (Matt.). "*And*" (Mark) "*James the son of Alphæus*" (Matt., Mark, Luke); James the Just, or, as elsewhere called, the Lord's brother, or James the less, son of Mary and Cleopas or Alphæus; "*and Lebbeus, who is called Thaddeus*" (Matt.); "*and Thaddeus*" (Mark). But St. Luke does not here observe the same order as the other two; for, speaking of Thaddeus under his appellation of Judas, he here passes him over, to mention him with the other Judas, distinguishing the one more clearly from the other; and thus is avoided the necessary connexion of any one else, as put in constant conjunction with the traitor: "*Judas,*" he adds, "*the brother of James;*" the two united in Holy Writ by their Epistles, wherein St. Jude designates himself as the brother of James. "*And Simon who is called Zelotes*" (Luke); "*and*" (Mark) "*Simon the Canaanite*" (Matt., Mark): the Canaanite, says St. Jerome, meaning the same as Zelotes, for Chana signifies zeal; or if, as some think, the termination rather indicates place, from Cana, the village in Galilee, or from Canaan. "*And Judas Iscariot*" (Matt., Mark, Luke); from the town Carioth, as St. Jerome says,—it is mentioned in Joshua⁵; "*who also was the traitor*" (Luke); "*who also betrayed Him*" (Matt.,

⁵ Josh. xv. 25.

Mark). Thus the name of Judah is saved from reproach, in that there were two of the name who might represent those of Judah who are faithful, and those who are rejected;—those, to use the words of St. Jude himself, “who kept not their first estate.”

When the Apostles are mentioned together in the Acts, St. Luke himself puts Andrew the fourth, as St. Mark does here; and again mentions Jude, as he does here, next to the last, or rather the last of the Eleven; for Judas had then ceased to be among them. Not to enter into other reasons for our Lord’s choosing the traitor, we may add the beautiful reflection of St. Ambrose: “Judas also is chosen, not from ignorance, but Providential design. How great is truth, that to have an adversary for its minister weakens it not! How great the loving-kindness of the Lord, that He would rather incur with us a doubt of His judgment, than of His affection! He had taken upon Himself our frailty, and therefore declined not even this part of our infirmity. He was willing to be deserted, to be betrayed, to be delivered up by His own Apostle, that thou, when deserted and betrayed by a companion, mayest bear it with patience, that thy judgment hath erred, thy kindness been lost⁶.”

SECTION IX

THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN

“And He came down together with them, and stood on a plain; and a crowd of His disciples, and a great

⁶ In Luc. lib. v. 45.

multitude of people from all” the country of “*Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon; who came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were troubled with unclean spirits, and they were healed. And all the multitude sought to touch Him; for power went forth from Him, and healed all*” (Luke). St. Mark, just before the ordination of the Apostles, gives the same account, and of their seeking to touch Him. The notices are but short of all that takes place about this time, while our Lord was retiring to the coast or standing on the plain amidst these multitudes: but we may conclude that He must have been teaching as well as healing; for, indeed, what other purpose would there have been in His being in a boat with the multitudes on the shore, as St. Mark says, and which was afterwards His mode of teaching them by parables? The Sermon, therefore, on the Plain, as well as the Sermon on the Mount, whether the same or not, must comprise but a small portion of the teaching during this season: vast and comprehensive in itself, yet comparatively but little of all that He said. “*And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples.*” Blessed already are they on whom He lifted up the light of His countenance; sitting, as we may suppose Him now to have been, in the midst of them, while there were around Him, not His Apostles only, but those disciples also out of which the Twelve had been taken, and beyond them the multitude. Some say, taking up the suggestion of St. Augustin, that there might have been two Sermons about the same time—the one on the mountain, and the other lower down; that in the former, in St. Matthew, “He sat,” as addressing His disciples; and that on the plain, in St. Luke, “He stood,” as preaching to the people; and that hence

a custom prevailed in the Church, that in addressing the learned the teacher sits, but in speaking to the multitude he stands⁷. Whether these Sermons can be considered the same or not, has been elsewhere discussed⁸.

“He looked on them, *and said, Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*” In the Sermon on the Mount it was general; “He opened His mouth, and said, Blessed are the poor in spirit;” but here, with more direct and particular application, “He lifted up His eyes on His disciples” immediately around Him, claiming them for His own by His gracious look of acceptance, and said of them, “Blessed are ye:” whereas, in St. Matthew, this application to the disciples, “Blessed are ye,” comes after the eight more indirect and general statements. In the Sermon on the Mount it spoke of the heart—“the poor in spirit”—but here of the outward condition; for if the possession of riches makes the entrance into the kingdom difficult, the absence of them must be blessed; it must be blessed to resemble Christ and His disciples, though but in external circumstances: if there had been any better condition, Christ would have chosen it for Himself and them. His promise to the blessed Mother was, “A sword shall pierce thy soul;” to the disciples, “Ye shall have tribulation;” to the beloved two, “Ye shall drink of My cup;” to St. Paul, “I will show him how great things he must suffer.” To be without suffering is a sign of reprobation: “Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.” “For he cannot actively follow Christ, the very mirror of poverty, who is cumbered with things temporal⁹.” These words, “Ye poor,” thus

⁷ Vita Christi.

⁸ See The Nativity, pp. 429. 432.

⁹ Vita Christi, p. 142.

taken literally, contain more than when supposed to be but the same as "the poor in spirit;" implying that God hath "chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith¹;" that "to the poor the Gospel is preached." The saying here is without qualification, "Ye poor:" and thus in the parable of the rich man, it is only stated of Lazarus that he was poor; his outward condition only is mentioned, but the state of his heart is not there described. And the Prophet before had especially invited the needy; "He that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat²." And thus was it now set forth as in a glass; inasmuch as those who received spiritual blessings from Christ, were those, for the most part, who by bodily wants and sufferings were brought to Him. But, on the other hand, it may be said, that the persons whom our Lord addressed were not only poor, but likewise poor in spirit; for the Apostles who were around Him had now relinquished all for Christ's sake, and they were even now hungry, so as to be eating the ears of corn from hunger: and this may suggest limitations; for it is not "the poor," but "ye poor," such as ye are. Of the poverty here spoken of, St. Basil says, "Nothing involuntary deserves a blessing; because all virtue is characterized by the freedom of the will³." And Eusebius: "The first step in the scale belongs to those who, by Divine instinct, embrace poverty⁴." "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches⁵." But the former interpretation is preferable, as containing more the comprehensiveness of Divine teaching.

"Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled." He may leave, then, those whom He loves, not only to be poor, but poor even to hunger, and from hunger even to

¹ James ii. 5.

² Isa. lv. 1.

³ In Ps. xxxiii.

⁴ Aur. Cat.

⁵ Prov. xiii. 7.

die ; yet still even then abundant is His care and the fulfilment of His promise : if through such things He confers spiritual blessings, so that faith in realizing the same is "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things ;" "as though sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ;" not only "in cold and nakedness," but even "in deaths oft." For what if we should even perish from hunger, yet, in the expression of Quesnel, what is it ? "A moment of hunger here, in order to all eternity to be filled with God !" But His sayings do even now take out the sting from temporal evils, and bind the strong man of this world's tyranny by the bands of His beatitudes. Thus the teaching of Christ has a correspondence with His miracles ; for as those were to remove bodily distresses, so His precepts supply spiritual comforts under the same ; and, therefore, continue to be like perpetual miracles in His Church, administered, as those were, according to the faith of disciples, and thus removing those sufferings. The miracle once relieved hunger by the loaves multiplied ; the blessing continues to relieve the same with the fulness of God. In this and other places, it is remarkable how sameness or similarity of expression occurs with a meaning quite different ; for here there is "hunger" and "fulness ;" the same words that are used in one of the eight beatitudes, but in another sense, of them that "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and therefore are "filled" with the same.

"*Blessed are ye that weep now : for ye shall laugh.*" "Put my tears into Thy bottle," says the Psalmist, because our tears are so much accounted of by God. Infants cry when born ; this is an image of our new birth, which must be with tears as well as the old. "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth," is true of "the Mother of all living," which

is the Church ; as her own birth was from the side of her Lord in death. "Laughing" implies not only joy, but surprise, as at unsuitableness, "amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for⁶:" as gnashing of teeth with weeping implies disappointment. So shall it be when they shall be with Him who shall wipe away tears from all faces. Here our Lord brings forth in the fulness of the evangelical promise, what the Psalmist had said of him that now goeth on his way weeping : and the Prophet, "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted ;" "to comfort all that mourn in Zion ; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness⁷."

"*Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from themselves, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy ; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven. For according to these things did their fathers unto the prophets.*" Here, as in the Sermon on the Mount, persecution and the "perfect work" of patience comes last. St. Bernard well says, "As stars shine in the night, but in the day appear not, so virtue, which appeareth not in prosperity, in adversity shineth forth⁸." Thus the last Beatitude is not so much one distinct of itself, as the illustration of the preceding, and confirmation of them. But these things were most fulfilled in the Son of Man, and written of Him. He was poor, for He had "not where to lay His head ;" He "was an hungred ;" "He wept ;" He was "hated without a cause ;" He was "cast out ;" His Name was cast out

⁶ Wisdom v. 2.

⁷ Isa. lxi. 1. 3 ; and see Isa. xxxv. 10.

⁸ Serm. xxvii. in Cantic.

as evil, as a Samaritan, yea, as having a devil; so mysteriously was it fulfilled, that "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." Indeed, all these, both woes and beatitudes, are but the various shapes of the shadow of the cross,—the preaching of Christ crucified,—exemplified in the saints from the beginning of the world.

There is in this exordium the same completeness as there is in that of the Sermon on the Mount, but both in a manner perfectly distinct. The eight Beatitudes are there complete in themselves; so, likewise, are here the four Beatitudes and four Woes, as antithetical to each other. And if, as some say, the Beatitudes are eight, because the eighth is the day of the Resurrection, the same will apply to this also; for the four blessings and four woes will make up the eight, which is the Resurrection of the just and unjust. But the Beatitudes here are the same in number as the Gospels themselves; and for the same reasons, being as it were the four streams of Paradise that water the earth; "the four spirits of the heavens⁹," which go forth before "the Lord of all the earth." And as the four symbols of good are in contrast with the "four kingdoms" of evil, or four quarters of the globe; therefore, the woes also, as well as the blessings, are four in number. The number four regulating things temporal for good or evil, as four seasons, and four winds, and "four angels" that "hold the four winds of the earth¹," that they hurt not earth or sea; which may well correspond with those four heavenly blessings that prevent the four evils of things temporal to hurt those who have the seal of God on their foreheads; the four parts of Christ's garment, by persecution torn, yet full of blessing, with the four heathen soldiers; the four children of God,

⁹ Zech. vi. 5.

¹ Rev. vii. 1.

full of the knowledge of God in Babylon; the four men loose in the fire, whom it harms not, for the Son of God is among them. And these four embrace, as St. Ambrose describes them, the number and the character of the four cardinal virtues; and therefore do, in fact, become equivalent also to the eight graces of the Beatitudes on the Mount. "So united," he says, "and linked together, are the virtues one with another, that he who has one appears to have many; and the saints have each one especial virtue, but the more abundant virtue has the richer reward." The time when this Sermon was delivered, renders the introduction of the woes remarkable, if its place is here rightly given, as distinct from the Sermon on the Mount; for in the Sermon on the Mount there are no woes,—but now, a year later and after so much longer trial, four woes are denounced with the four blessings. And again, a year and a half after this, in the Temple there are many woes. Bede, alluding to the mystic meaning of the two places where they were delivered, says, "On the mountain He pronounced the blessings of the righteous, on the plain the woes of the wicked."

"But woe unto you that are rich: for ye receive your consolation;" having the comforts, as they are called, of this world, though they be accompanied with their own inherent disquietude and emptiness, being compared to the husks that feed swine, and "the mouth filled with gravel." Such is he that says to his soul, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years;" "laying up treasure for himself, and not rich towards God." "They," says St. Ambrose, "who shall have received the consolation of this present life, shall have lost the reward of that which shall be for ever²."

² In Luc. lib. v. 69.

“*Woe unto you that are filled : for ye shall hunger ;*” as the rich man faring sumptuously every day, but afterwards thirsting for a drop of water. “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion³.” And, together with the opposite Beatitude, it is expressed by the Prophet Isaiah : “Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry :” “behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart⁴.” Pain arises from natural want, pleasure on the filling up of that want ; but fulness and satiety of the body deaden the soul, and make it unmeet for things spiritual. The body never flourishes but at the cost of the soul ; and the converse also is true, that the soul is never in health but to the impoverishing of the body. A life of holiness consists in prayer, and prayer is inseparably united with fasting. “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live⁵ ;” and “if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin.” And beside self-imposed mortification, “ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption⁶.”

“*Woe unto you that laugh now : for ye shall mourn and weep.*” “There is a way,” says Solomon, “which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sad ; and the end of that mirth is heaviness⁷.” “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting ;” but why so ? The wise man refers to the same reason as is here given, as looking to the end ; “for that is the end of all men ; and the living will lay it to his heart⁸.”

“*Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you ;*

³ Amos vi. 1.

⁵ Rom. viii. 13.

⁷ Prov. xiv. 12, 13.

⁴ Isa. lxxv. 13, 14.

⁶ Rom. viii. 23.

⁸ Eccles. vii. 2.

for so did their fathers unto the false prophets." "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own⁹;" "but the friendship of the world is enmity with God¹." In all things, observes St. Chrysostom, we look to the decision of the learned; how then can the multitude judge of virtue, seeing that they understand it not? But God alone knoweth it, and alone can reward it.

What do all these Beatitudes and Woes teach us but this? that in all that is holy and good the pain comes first, and the joy remains; but with the good things of this world, the pleasure comes first, and there remains the SORROW.

SECTION X

THE LAWS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

"But I say unto you which hear;" not merely, we may suppose, which hear with bodily ears, but ye that have ears to hear in the sense in which our Lord so often used the words. "*Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for those that despitefully use you.*" Thus Moses, and thus David when Shimei cursed. But with unspeakable weight fell these words on the ears of those who now, from day to day, with eager eyes and astonished hearts were witnessing, for the first time in the world, all these things being done in infinite perfection of all goodness by the Son of God Himself, in all the miracles, and actions, and words of His daily life; and perhaps among them who approached Him more nearly, were burning thoughts of retaliation and self-defence against those who were persecuting, even

⁹ John xv. 19.

¹ James iv. 4.

unto the death, the Giver of all good ; with secret wishes of bringing down fire from heaven, as Elias did, or of the earth opening, as it did before Moses. And known to the Searcher of hearts were the minds of all persons in that crowd among which, perhaps, there was not one who bore not "the plague of his own heart" in this respect, and had some trial of this kind besetting his path, to whose case the words applied.

"To him that striketh thee on the cheek offer the other also." The secret plea of revenge is self-defence, but even that is here taken away. Here, says St. Augustin, the retaliation is not forbidden which avails for correction ; but no one is suited for inflicting such retaliation whose hate is not surpassed by his love ; for a father hateth not a son whom he correcteth. And such retaliation on account of love is a part of mercy². "What is so wonderful," says St. Ambrose, "as this affording the other cheek to him that strikes ? Is not all the violence broken of the angry man, and his wrath appeased ? Is it not the case through such patience, that by his own repentance thou smitest still more him that smote thee³ ?" And not in personal violence only, but in property also the same charity suffereth long, and is kind. *"And from him that taketh away thine outer garment, hinder not also the taking of thine inner coat."* Even as thy merciful Lord Himself, Who was utterly stripped of all things for thy sake, and His garments parted among His enemies. *"Give to every one that asketh thee,"* after the very pattern of what God Himself does to you, Who hath said, "Ask, and ye shall have." Give always, and if not the very thing that is asked, yet what you can,—good-will at all events, which will always find some most suitable return

² De Serm. Dom. lib. i. 63.

³ In Luc. ad loc.

for him that asks : grant what is good for him to receive and for you to give ; for thus does God grant, Who, in saying that He always gives to him that asks, yet bestows not always those very things that are asked, but sometimes far better, always an equivalent, if not the same. St. Chrysostom, indeed, urges that even on all indifferently we should bestow, and that so we should always have those on whom we may exercise compassion ; thus Abraham, he says, by hospitably receiving all, entertained also angels. Yet surely true love will not always give the very thing required, after the example of the Divine charity, which qualifies its gifts according to the receiver.

“And from him that taketh away thy goods demand them not again,” i. e. demand them not by strife and contention, or with covetous importunity. “In all kinds of injuries our Lord teaches us that Christians ought to have a mind most patient, most merciful, most ready to endure even more than they suffer, on account of the hope of eternal retribution⁴.” These are particular precepts, capable of application most varied and extensive ; but one golden law will contain all : *“And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also likewise unto them.”* This precept, indeed, may not be new, as it is said to occur even in a heathen writer ; but what of that ? wherever it is found, the maxim is still all sterling gold ; and here it comes forth stamped with the King’s Image.

“For if ye love them which love you, what thanks are due to you for this ? for even” those Heathens and Publicans whom ye consider as *“sinners love those that love them.”* For natural love is produced by kindness, by kindred, by gain, by time ; but spiritual love descends from Heaven, as St. Chrysostom says ; and therefore it is not destroyed

⁴ Vita Christi, p. 155.

by those things that destroy natural love ; nay, burns the brighter for them. “*And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thanks are due to you? for even sinners do the same.*” Though even at the best we are unprofitable servants, yet, notwithstanding, “thanks” and a “reward” are due to those who act above nature according to the love of Christ crucified. “*And if ye lend to those from whom ye hope to receive, what thanks to you? for even sinners lend to sinners that they may receive as much*” in return. For the Old Testament had said, “Thou shalt lend thy brother sufficient for his need⁵ ;” but the Law of the Gospel was far more than this, to lend with no hope of return. But when it is said, “Lend, hoping for nothing again,” this of course signifies hoping for nothing of man, but being content to have God as thy debtor, inasmuch as we are told that this is lending to the Lord ; it implies, therefore, preferring to have God thy debtor rather than man ; having God, as it were, security for repayment, and not man. But, as St. Augustin says, he who loves a friend on account of any advantage, loves not the friend, but the advantage to be gained by him. And therefore God, as there is no greater or better object of love, is loved for Himself alone. The Divine retribution, therefore, is God Himself ; for, as He is the beginning of every good, so He wills also to be the end : I am, says He, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending. For nothing ought we to seek, for the love of Jesus, but His own sweet Presence⁶. “*But love your enemies,*” “whereby,” says Chrysostom with great beauty, “thou wilt confer more upon thyself than him ; for he is beloved by a fellow-servant, but thou art made like unto God.” “Love your enemies, *and do good and lend, hoping for*

⁵ Deut. xv. 8.

⁶ Vita Christi, p. 158.

nothing again, and your reward shall be abundant." The term reward is that which St. Matthew had used of the former subject, "What reward have ye?" implying that there would be a reward; "So that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous'." And, as God Himself says to Abraham, "I am thy exceeding great reward." Not without reward, says St. Bernard, is God loved, but without looking to reward. "*And ye shall be the sons of the Most High.*" As ye are sons of God by nature and creation, so may ye become His sons by grace and imitation, in that which most peculiarly belongs to God, the showing of mercy and loving-kindness. Not in power, as the evil angels, who fell thereby into hell; not in knowledge, as our first parents in Paradise; but in mercy may we imitate God⁸. Power and knowledge shall Antichrist show, but not mercy. "*For He is kind unto the unthankful and evil. Be ye therefore merciful,*" or, perhaps, more properly, "become ye merciful," as if indicating the obtaining of a habit, "*even as your Father is merciful.*" Faith will lend hoping for nothing again; and hope joined to the same will look for a reward in Heaven; but charity added thereto, which is the greatest of the three, will love God, and loving God will love to be as God,—loving men, and loving works of love as loving Him Who Himself is Love; and the love of Whom is itself its own exceeding recompense.

Since, therefore, the mercies of God to us in His Providences, and as manifested in Jesus Christ, are to be the measure of our duty, this will be immediately set forth in some points of conduct such as now follow. "*And judge not, and ye shall not be judged.*" As Christ says of Himself, that He came "not to judge the world, but to save,"

⁷ Ps. lviii. 11.

⁸ Vita Christi, p. 173.

so must the disciple be as his Master, not judging, but showing mercy, in order that he may be himself judged according to the same law of mercy. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment⁹." But one of the chief things here prescribed would be, that we should interpret with a favourable construction those actions of which it is doubtful from what intention they proceed¹. "*Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned;*" and from words the command proceeds to actions: "*forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given you.*" "Judge not" is of doubtful conduct; "condemn not," of evident faults; "forgive," of faults towards ourselves; "give," of what is our own. "Two are the works of mercy," says a Latin writer, "that liberate us: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you. The first refers to pardoning faults; the second to conferring benefits: do ye wish to be forgiven? then forgive; do ye wish that it should be given to you? then give." These two, he also says, are the wings of prayer by which it flies to God: if a man forgives him that commits any thing against him, and gives to him that needeth². "*Good measure pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*" Of the bosom we have a like mention in the Psalmist: "Reward them sevenfold into their bosom." This seems to be understood of the giving and retribution of God. "He shall receive," says St. Cyril, "more abundant recompense from God;" and

⁹ James ii. 12.

¹ August. Ser. Supp. lxvi.

² In Vita Christi, p. 174.

Theophylact, "So the Lord will give a large and overflowing measure into your bosom." And we may add, "For they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed in the Resurrection of the just." But it is here clearly stated, that not of God only at last, but even now of men in earnest of the same, shall there be an abundant recompense; for "the liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself;" while "there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty³." And even in the former point of judging others is this true, that he who judges of others with love and gentleness, is usually judged of by them in the same manner. But St. Augustin, in explanation, suggests that "they give" because they are the cause why God shall give to us, as they repay the cup of cold water given to them by the reward which is attached to it of God. And, perhaps, we may add, that they obtain it by their prayers and intercessions with God. But, possibly, the term "they give" may admit of a similar interpretation to where it is used in other places as "they shall receive you into everlasting habitations." Yet, whatever secondary explanation it may admit of, the first and highest must be understood. "With the same measure," i. e. with what kind of measure, if with severity we deal, severely shall we be dealt with; if with mercifulness, we shall be treated mercifully: but of course not "the same measure" in degree, but in either case with great increase, according to the proportion. "He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully⁴." It will be "measure," because the eternal reward will be dispensed by proportion and according to deservings; "good," because it will be the true good; embracing in itself every thing that

³ Prov. xi. 25. 24.

⁴ 2 Cor. ix. 6.

is really good ; “pressed down,” because it will be to all fulness, having no part empty, nothing to desire ; “they shall be satisfied,” with the fulness of God ; and “shaken together,” because it will be firmly established and secure ; and “running over,” or abundant, as surpassing all their deserts ;—in that they give things temporal for eternal, worldly things for Divine⁵. But the quality of actions thus to be rewarded will depend on the intention, not on the external act ; for the widow’s mite shall outweigh the gifts of the rich in that great recompense.

SECTION XI

LAWS OF SELF-CONDUCT

THERE are here introduced sayings, many of which do not appear to have any immediate connexion with one another ; they seem detached sayings selected out of our Lord’s discourse, where the whole of the context is not given, and cannot of course be supplied. The following proverbial saying is spoken by our Lord on a subsequent occasion⁶, with an immediate reference to the Pharisees, of whose traditionary commands He was earnestly cautioning His disciples ; and here, although it has no express reference of that kind, and has more the character of an universal warning, yet it may well be supposed to contain all those admonitions respecting the Law and the Pharisees which are given in the Sermon on the Mount, and briefly comprehended in that saying, “Unless your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” Or

⁵ Vita Christi, p. 174.

⁶ Matt. xv. 14.

this may apply to the disciples, as themselves intended to be teachers of the word, which can only be effectual by themselves being the patterns of all virtue, and made conformable to the example of Christ; and in this sense it may also have a secret reference both to what goes before and to what follows: Judge not these Pharisees, but be merciful and forbearing towards them, as you see Me; for the sinner cannot amend the sinner, nor the blind lead the blind. Improve and convert your own hearts, and you will see more clearly how to deal with them; the heart itself must in you be amended, that you may act and speak with Divine wisdom, and be as your Master. And in this general mode of application St. Cyril and others take it. Thus it may apply to all the teaching of the world which differs from this of Christ.

“And He spake a parable unto them,” or proverb, *“Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into a ditch?”* Into the pit of wickedness here, that of destruction hereafter. “When the shepherd,” says St. Gregory, “walks through abrupt places, it follows that the flock is led to a precipice.” And St. Bernard, “The thing is ridiculous and still more perilous, a blind watchman, an unlearned teacher, a lame forerunner, a negligent prelate, a dumb preacher.” But, alas, as the lame love to go before, so fools to take the lead⁷. The expression appears to be a proverb in common use; and our Lord’s custom of applying popular proverbs seems to sanction and recommend our use of such sententious sayings of practical wisdom, by a new adaptation to things heavenly.

“The disciple is not above his Master.” This expression occurs on another occasion in St. Matthew, when it is added, that if they had called the master of the house

⁷ In Vita Christi, p. 361.

Beelzebub, how much more them of his household ; and it is there coupled with another proverbial expression, which also occurs again in St. John, and is afterwards referred to as having been spoken : "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord⁸;" "*but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.*" The word here rendered "perfect" is very different from that in St. Matthew, "be ye perfect;" but it twice occurs in St. Paul's Epistles, where it is rendered by this word "perfection;" "This also we wish, even your perfection⁹;" and "for the perfecting of the Saints¹." He that is perfectly established in his Master's teaching must be like Him, both in the persecutions he will meet with, and in the love with which he will requite the same.

But it seems as if the next injunction was connected with the previous command of not judging others, in the same manner as the whole passage occurs in St. Matthew ; and it is difficult to supply any other reference but this of not judging others. "*But why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, while the beam that is in thine own eye thou perceivest not? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, while thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine eye, then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote which is in the eye of thy brother.*" "In the eye," that is, in the conscience and intention ; for such is the eye of the soul : and if it be single, makes the whole body full of light. As if He had said, Why, omitting the consideration of thyself, art thou considering the errors of others? This precept has been thus drawn

⁸ John xv. 20.

⁹ Κατάρτισιν, 2 Cor. xiii. 9.

¹ Καταρτισμὸν, Eph. iv. 12.

out: piously and cautiously should we be on the watch, that when necessity compels us to reprove any one, we should first think whether it be a fault which we never have had; and if we have never had the like, let us remember that we also are men and might have had it. But if we have had it, and now are free from it, then let the sense of this our common infirmity come feelingly to our mind, that pity and not ill-will may precede such reproof. But if we find the same fault in ourselves, let us not reprove him, but sympathize and condole with him, inviting him not to submit to our reproof, but to join his endeavours of amendment with our own². In all those things we should consider, says St. Basil, how difficult a matter it is to judge others; for it behoves us first of all to look into and judge ourselves, which appears of all things the most arduous and important. For, as the eye sees all things without, yet exercises not its sight upon itself, so is it with our understanding, which, while it corrects the sin of another, with difficulty perceives its own defects³.

The passage which next follows seems, in like manner with the preceding, not to allow of its being placed in immediate connexion with the words going before. Where it occurs in the Sermon on the Mount, it is spoken in caution against false prophets, which are to be known by their fruits; and in another place, where the same words are found in St. Matthew, it is with respect to the Pharisees speaking blasphemy; in the former case, it seems to speak of deeds as the fruit of the heart; in the latter of words, and, indeed, is followed, as here, by the expression, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Here in St. Luke neither of these applications appear very obvious; but from the remarks

² In Vita Christi, p. 175.

³ In regulis brevioribus.

that afterwards ensue (as in the passage last alluded to in St. Matthew), which evidently refer more especially to words. If it should be taken here in connexion with the preceding, then we must understand it in allusion to the hypocrisy just spoken of, in condemning others without improving our own hearts. "*For it is not a good tree which maketh corrupt fruit; nor a corrupt tree that maketh good fruit; for each tree is known from its own fruit. For they collect not figs from a thorn, nor of a bramble-bush gather a grape. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*" The fig and the grape are the fruits of the Church; the thorns and the bramble, or the thorn and the thistle, as it is in St. Matthew, are often put for this world and its cares and short-lived pleasures; or the fig and the grape may represent the sweetness of a new life, kindled into being and formed by the Sun of Righteousness and the dews of His Spirit; or the grape may represent the active life of grace; the fig the sweetness of spiritual contemplation; these grow not out of the desires of the flesh, or low earthly carefulness. "The good man bringeth forth that which is good," flowing, as it were, spontaneously from that "good treasure" which lies hidden within, as the ancient Greeks kept their treasures in a sanctuary in the inmost place of their houses. And this treasure is indeed "good" as it is infinitely beyond all earthly good. Again: "the mouth speaketh," may be supposed to signify all expression that flows from the heart by thought, word, and action: these all take their hue and shape from the heart; these all depend on, and are characterized by, the intention of the heart, which

is that good treasure within,—the best gift of God. “It is according to the mouth,” says St. Augustin, “that God judges all things of the heart, because He is not ignorant of the intention from which all things proceed.” “From the abundance,” because there is ever more within than is poured forth; the heart is as a deep fountain, these but the streams. This parable of the tree that “cannot bring forth good fruit,” and that which “cannot bring forth evil fruit,” like some other expressions in Holy Scripture, such as “ye cannot serve God and Mammon,” suggests a far wider distinction, not only between the principles of good and evil, but between good and evil men, as their hearts are known to God, than we, judging as men do, could have conceived. For to us the mixture of good and evil in mankind seems to wear down distinctive character, deadens our sense of moral responsibility, and our apprehension of the final separation between the two. But the blessings, and woes, and whole tenor of Scripture, intimate an infinite contrast and division; and sometimes one of long continuance, as “I never knew you;” and yet it declares under this state of things, “Judge nothing before the time,” till God brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and makes known the counsels of the hearts.

“*And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?*” “Many believed on Him,” says St. John on a former occasion, “but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, for He knew what was in man.” Such is the dead faith of those who in words profess that they know God, but in works deny Him; the living faith is to believe with the heart, with the mouth to confess, by

⁴ De Doctr. Chris. lib. ii. cap. 2.

works to bear witness,—and thus believing, to advance towards, and to be made one with Christ.

“*Every one,*”—for there is no exception,—every one “*that cometh unto Me, and heareth My words, and doeth them, I will show you what he is like. He is like unto a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and placed its foundation on the rock. And when a flood took place, a stream broke violently against that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded on the rock.*” Building up by good works upon Christ, Who is the Rock, is doing such works as He has commanded, and with the intention of pleasing Him; for such it is that makes the works good. And being founded on the rock, is by faith and love being grounded on Him, not on the movable foundation of earthly purposes; for God alone is immovable; all creatures are unstable: that only which is built on God endures. The going deeper, is coming more and more in purity of intention to the simplicity which is in Christ. It was this Rock which St. Paul felt beneath his feet, when, speaking of all contingencies in time and eternity that might shake the soul, he exclaimed, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Christ is the Rock, yet building upon the Rock is exclusively obedience to Christ, in distinction from knowledge and profession; both the states described are of professing Christians,—of those that hold the Catholic faith.

“*But he that heareth them, and doeth them not, is like unto a man who built his house on the earth without a foundation; on which the stream beat with violence, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great*” (Luke). The storms may be the various temptations to which the soul is subject, which move not him who is steadily fixed on Christ. By temptation, it has been said,

the house is shaken; by delight in ill it totters and inclines; by consent it falls⁶. And great is the fall: With such simplicity, as Paschal observes, does Christ speak of things infinitely great. For the fall of nations, the breaking of worlds, and rush of elements, is as nothing to the ruin of a human soul, losing heaven, falling to the bottomless pit.

Our Lord often terminates His discourse with warnings of ill; human teachers mostly with hopes of good.

SECTION XII

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

WE have now found our Lord driven from the Jews, and retiring from them among the crowds that flocked to Him from regions far and near; thus is the fall of the Jews becoming more and more the rise of the Gentiles,—and at this period occurs this remarkable anticipation of their faith and acceptance in the Centurion. St. Matthew introduces it soon after the Sermon on the Mount, but apparently only among other miracles he is narrating, without reference to the period of its occurrence; whereas St. Luke's words connect it with the foregoing discourse. It seems evident from a part of this narrative, that St. Luke had seen St. Matthew's account, from repeating his words; but the circumstances which he gives in detail add greatly to the interesting nature of the whole, and indeed tend to explain part of St. Matthew's narrative, of which we should not otherwise have known the full force.

“And when He had fulfilled all His sayings in the

⁶ Vita Christi.

hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum" (Luke). The Pharisees, who were there with the Herodians conspiring against Him, had now, probably, retired elsewhere, or their hostile notice of His movements had subsided. "*And a slave of a certain centurion, which was dear unto him, was sick, and about to die*" (Luke). Of the other centurion in the Acts, it was said that he "gave much alms;" of this, that his slave was dear to him,—as dear, it would seem, as if he were a son; thus mercy in both led the way to Christian faith. Capernaum, being the chief city of that part, the centurion's house was probably near, as commanding the soldiers in the district; but some suppose that he dwelt in the town itself, and that this occurrence takes place on our Lord's approach. St. Matthew's account is, "*And when Jesus had entered into Capernaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant is laid in the house sick of the palsy, dreadfully tormented*" (Matt.). For such was the purport of what took place; but the centurion's approach and request was, in fact, made through others, for he had not come himself, but spoke through the Jews, as St. Luke informs us. In like manner as when St. Matthew speaks of the mother of Zebedee's children coming to make a request, and our Lord's reply to her, St. Mark, in recording the same, gives the account of her sons as the persons speaking and addressed. "*And when he had heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, entreating Him that He would come and save his servant*" (Luke). The faith of the centurion, like that of the Canaanitish woman, seems strongly marked with an humble sense of his own condition, as separate from the Israel of God; and this, being indeed but a right apprehension of the truth, is a part of that humility which raises him above

all in Israel in the sight of God. And thus, as it were, by a sort of Divine Providence, these Jews are sent; so that they might be without excuse, if, on beholding the miracle and the Gentile believing, they still believe not. And in wonderful harmony is it with the economy of the Gospel, that, if the Gentiles are brought in, yet it is by the instrumentality of the Jews; as when the Wise men came, yet before they found and worshipped, Herod inquired of the priests, and with them pointed out the way. They, even in their unbelief, open the door, through which the Gentiles, by faith, enter; for "salvation is of the Jews."

"And when they had come to Jesus, they earnestly besought Him, saying, that he is worthy to whom He should grant this; for he loveth our nation, and himself hath built us the synagogue" (Luke). He loved the holy nation, because in them was the true God; His oracles, His sacrifices, His laws, His prophets; by faith discerning this, and in love forgetting the wickedness of the Jews around him, he loved their nation, and promoted their religion. It is remarkable, that the Jews, even in asking for another, speak of worthiness, instead of appealing to the mercy of the Searcher of hearts; but the centurion alleged his unworthiness, looking to Him in faith; and thus did his righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who, "going about to establish their own righteousness," knew not the righteousness of God. But he was merciful, and so obtained mercy; he was poor in spirit, and so found entrance into the kingdom; he had built a synagogue, making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and through these his friends entering into everlasting habitations.

"And Jesus saith unto him," through these his messengers, *"I will come and heal him"* (Matt.). For such, we find from St. Luke, had been the request, that He would go to

the place and heal him. Our Lord was thus ever wont to bow to the infirmities of their faith, and to do what they required, even to the words of their request; while with their increasing faith increases also the manifestation of His power. "He would not," says St. Ambrose, "go to the nobleman, that He might not seem to have respected his riches: here He goes immediately, that He might not seem to have despised the low estate of a centurion's slave; for, whether bond or free, we are all one in Christ Jesus." But the centurion, who was at home watching over his servant, had now, on consideration, regretted that he had made such a request; and, perhaps, felt within him the secret working of our Lord's favour as He spake afar off to his messengers, shedding light or deeper faith on his soul. Or it may be, as St. Chrysostom and some others seem to think, that the request that He would come, was that of the Jews only, and not of the centurion; the centurion having only wished to state the urgency of his distress, and so leaving it to Christ; even as the Jew spoke of his worthiness while he thought of nothing but his unworthiness. And, indeed, it is St. Luke only who speaks of the Jewish elders, and he only introduces the request that He would come, so that our Lord in coming would be fulfilling their request, but not his. Now, however, on hearing of our Lord's approach, he was overcome with a sense of his own unworthiness to receive one so great; and that his God should come to be his guest. He forgets his own need, in his sense of the majesty of Christ: he loved men, but he feared God more; or rather, as love raises the object of its regard, love had made a slave to be to him as a son, and love now raises his mind to a right apprehension of God in Christ.

"And the centurion answered and said" (Matt.); or, as St. Luke records the circumstance more in detail, *"And Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house,"* as no doubt some had hastily returned and brought him word that our Lord was Himself coming, together with those elders of the Jews whom he had sent to Him, *"the centurion sent friends unto Him,"* having before sent a more formal deputation, he now sends those that were about him; feeling unworthy as a Gentile, he therefore sent Jews to plead for him; feeling unworthy as a sinner, he therefore sent his friends;—*"saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself; for"* (Luke), *"Lord"* (Matt.), *"I am not such a one as that Thou shouldest enter under my roof"* (Matt., Luke). It was an expression of the same feeling as that of St. Peter, when he said, *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."* *"Wherefore I did not think myself worthy to come unto Thee"* (Luke). Perhaps, having before thought what he had hardly ventured to express, that our Lord would have performed the miracle rather by His spiritual power than by His bodily presence. *"But say in a word"* (Luke); *"but speak the word only"* (Matt.), *"and my servant shall be healed"* (Matt., Luke); so right an apprehension had he, though a heathen, of the power of God; and he proceeds to argue thus on his faith, from the analogy of visible society, and the powers that held it, even from himself. *"For I also am a man (set,"* Luke) *"under authority,"* that of a superior, either the emperor or a military commander, yet *"having under me soldiers; and I say unto this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it"* (Matt., Luke). As a centurion, he says to a soldier, Come, or Go, and he cometh or goeth; as a master, he says to his servant, Do this, and he

doeth it ; but in both cases as one "under authority." He gives an example, not, St. Chrysostom observes, as similar, but as far exceeding : Thou art God, and I man ; I under authority, but Thou not under authority. He depreciates his very station as humble men usually do ; putting himself on a level with those below, as both alike under authority. There is humility in the very sound of this declaration of his power, as if he felt humbled at this, the service of men, to him a sinner. But how great was his faith ! The good sisters of Lazarus said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died ;" and the Jewish nobleman, slow to believe without signs and wonders, "Sir, come down ere my child die : " but this Gentile implies more than words can reach, the power of God every where present to execute His will, and the "ten thousand times ten thousand" ministering spirits that "hearken to the voice of His words." "He did no less," says St. Chrysostom, "than imagine to himself, as it seems to me, the armies of Heaven ; or that diseases, and death, and every thing else, were so subject to Christ as his soldiers to himself^o." His humility was pre-eminent, in that, though high in authority, he did not think himself worthy that Christ should come to him ; though he could build a synagogue, and Christ was exceeding poor : and great was his faith, for he had the highest-sense of His power ; and extraordinary his knowledge, for he conceived rightly of a spiritual Presence ; but over all was that charity that "vaunteth not itself" and "is kind ;" for he loved a helpless slave, and loved Israel, and had in love a worthy estimation of Christ.

"But Jesus, when He heard (these things," Luke), " marvelled" (Matt., Luke) "at him" (Luke), "and said to those

^o Hom. in Matt.

that followed Him" (Matt.); or, as St. Luke more particularly describes it, "*and turned Him about, and said unto the crowd that followed Him*" (Luke). This act of turning round appears to have been characterized with something unusually impressive in our Lord's manner, as it is more than once noticed: thus, "The Lord turned about and looked on His disciples" when He rebuked Peter; and when the woman touched the hem of His garment, "He turned about in the crowd;" and perhaps the expression of "turning about" may be meant to describe the same action, as when, on the rich young man departing, it is said, "And Jesus, having looked round about, says to His disciples;" for on these occasions His manner of turning to them, and His looking upon them, seems to have struck them as much as His impressive words on those occurrences. And of course the expression, that He "marvelled" at him, implies that He was as one that marvelled; not that any thing comes as unknown and marvellous to Him Who alone doeth great wonders, Who Himself was working in the centurion's heart the marvels of His grace. But as men admire and wonder at riches and indications of power and greatness, which are but as a shadow of the flower that fadeth, so Christ marvels, as with well-pleased admiration and acceptance, at signs of lowliness; admires with thanksgiving and rejoicing in spirit at His Father's work in revealing the hidden wisdom unto babes; and because, as He said, "no man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." Thus was He as one that marvelled; for "all such passions," says St. Augustin, "when they are spoken of God are not the signs of a mind disturbed, but of a Master that teacheth⁷."

⁷ De Gen. contr. Manich. lib. i. cap. 8.

He said to those that followed Him, "*Verily*" (Matt.) "*I say unto you, Not even in Israel have I found faith so great*" (Matt., Luke). Our Lord is of course not speaking of the Israel of old, the patriarchs and prophets, but of that house of Israel to whose lost sheep the Apostles were afterwards sent: nor is there any reason why in this Israel the Apostles themselves should be included; yet it may, perhaps, be true even of them, for we have not as yet heard such a declaration of His Godhead even from them; and besides which, it implies, of course, a comparison of the advantages of the Jews. This acknowledgment, indeed, of His Godhead, was received by our Lord almost like the confession of St. Peter, on which He says, "On this rock will I build My Church;" for immediately He speaks of His kingdom, and the Gentiles flowing into it. For accepting these as the first-fruits, and in anticipation of those Gentiles who were even now pressing into the kingdom, St. Matthew records these remarkable words: "*But I say unto you, that many from the east and west shall come, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;*" shall sit down, i. e. shall "rest in felicity, not carnally lying down, but spiritually reposing;" and according to a figure so frequent in Scripture, when "they shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house⁸;" "that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom⁹;" and "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb¹." And "with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," because God had especially called Himself their God, with reference to that eternal life which His saints have in Him²; and because

⁸ Ps. xxxvi. 8.

¹ Rev. xix. 9.

⁹ Luke xxii. 30.

² Matt. xxii. 32.

to them were the promises³ made of that holy land which is the country of the blessed,—for they looked for an abiding city, and were as strangers in that Canaan: and, lastly, because they were that olive stock into which the Gentiles were by faith grafted as the true Israelites. And thus from all nations many shall come “unto the Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” the Church “of the first-born,” “and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” Of which it had been said long before, “Arise, O Jerusalem, and stand on high, and look about toward the east, and behold thy children gathered from the west unto the east by the Word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the remembrance of God⁴.” “From the east and west” is an expression often used in the Prophets of the call of the Gentiles, meaning, of course, as the Psalmist says, He “hath called the world, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof⁵,” but some will add also a spiritual interpretation, that from the east may express those who are converted from their very youth; and from the west, those who turn in old age, or on approaching death.

“*But the children of the kingdom shall he cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matt.). The fulfilment of this before our eyes is the best interpretation of the words; for while we sit down in that Sabbath which the Law foretold, being no more, like this centurion, strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints and of the household of God; we see “the children of the kingdom” having not only that inward darkness which their want of faith then indicated, but cast into outer darkness also, gross Egyptian

³ Exod. xxxiii. 1.

⁴ Baruch v. 5.

⁵ Ps. i. 1.

darkness such as may be felt, so as to be for "a sign and for a wonder⁶;" for their light from without—their external religion that encircled them with light—is gone from them; their city, their temple, their ordinances, their prophets, are silent; while the Jerusalem that cometh down from above is lit up by the light of the Lamb. And this has come upon them, not with weeping only,—that "trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind⁷," which they were to have "among the nations,"—but "gnashing of teeth" also, in disappointment and self-indignation at the good things from which they are fallen; even as in that more awful ulterior fulfilment there will be a self-confidence going before, and a repenting too late; a blotting out of a book in which their names were once written; a taking of a crown from them to be given to another. Thus even now the Jews have lost what they thought they possessed; the Gentiles obtained what they looked not for. In that last sense, that outer darkness will consist in their being cast out from the beatific vision,—being, as it is often described, outside the door, with lamps extinguished; outside the marriage supper of the Lamb, where the guest who had not on the wedding-garment is "cast into outer darkness, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth⁸." In speaking of that dreadful condition, our Lord often repeats the same words of description, as if to fix it more deeply in our minds. It is outer and utter darkness; for if there be light there, it is no light to console or mitigate, but to aggravate and disclose occasions of sorrow.

We are now the children of the kingdom in a far more awful sense, and these things are addressed to us; "Be-

⁶ Deut. xxviii. 46.

⁷ Deut. xxviii. 65.

⁸ See *The Holy Week*, pp. 167—169.

cause of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear^o." Thus our Lord first of all pronounces this memorable prediction of the acceptance of the Gentiles, and then performs the miracle, that the latter might be a confirmation of the former. And now, therefore, after addressing the crowd of His disciples, He turns again to the request that was made.

"*And Jesus said unto the centurion*" (Matt.), speaking to him through the friends he had sent as He departed from them; or possibly, as St. Chrysostom suggests, the centurion might himself have come at last, after sending his friends, and so have himself addressed part of the words and received this reply, "*Go thy way;*" a benedictory term of dismissal, like that of "go in peace," which so often occurs in this manner; "*and as thou hast believed, so let it be done unto thee. And his servant was healed in that hour*" (Matt.). "*And they that had been sent returned unto the house, and found the servant in health that had been sick*" (Luke). "By declaring himself unworthy," says St. Augustin, "he showed himself worthy, not indeed into whose house, but into whose heart Christ, the Word of God, should enter¹." In the same manner it is applied in St. Chrysostom's Liturgy; and very forcibly does our own Bishop Andrews take up the same of Christ's presence in the Eucharist: "Lord, I am not worthy, I am not meet that Thou shouldest enter under the unclean roof of the house of my soul; for it is all desolate and fallen, and Thou hast not with me a place worthy wherein to lay Thine head."

St. Ambrose observes, that the incident arises with

^o Rom. xi. 20.

¹ Serm. lxii. 4.

great beauty after the precepts before given, as embodying them thus in a living form of practice; in that the slave of the Gentile centurion may signify the people of the nations which was held in the chains of this world's slavery, and sick with deadly passions, and brought to be healed by the goodness of the Lord. The author of the "Vita Christi" pursues a similar mystical adaptation. That this slave may represent the sinner, sold under sin, fast bound with its chains, and under bondage to divers lusts; that he is lying prostrate in all manner of uncleanness, and unable to raise himself up, being impotent to all good; "sick of the palsy," as ever full of trembling with apprehensions, and startled at the sound of a leaf; for "wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous, and, being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things²." And "grievously tormented" with unceasing anxieties, and the sense of guilt, "there is no peace to the wicked;" and at the point of death, or "ready to die," as in the other parable the natural man is described, "half-dead." And Reason, the master in this house of the body, can of itself do nothing; to all natural functions, indeed, and for all earthly purposes, it can give orders and be obeyed; but it can bring no help to the diseased soul, until through the Israel of God, from whence cometh salvation, it looks in faith to Christ; and, quickened in faith, can bring Christ spiritually into the house; then the regenerate man can do all things through Christ strengthening; feeling unworthy that Christ should enter his roof, yet even so, by Christ's presence, prevails, that obtaining strength it may say to good and holy thoughts, Come, and they are present; or bid unclean or anxious thoughts to depart, and they

² Wisdom xvii. 11.

go; and to the whole natural man, Do this, and he doeth it.

Grant me, O Lord, the faith of this blessed centurion; that I may have such a sense of Thy Word, and such a knowledge of Thy presence, that I may in heart hallow Thy Name, and that so Thy kingdom may come to me in greater fulness than that to which I have yet attained; that I may pray for the recovery of myself and mine; and that feeling assured that Thou hearest me, I may rest in faith on Thee; and knowing that I am not a stranger and foreigner, but a citizen of Thy kingdom, I may dread the fate of those who are cast out, and knock at the door which hath been closed, and seek in vain for the light of Thy countenance. Through Thy mercies to Israel and our fathers of old, I would approach Thee, having nothing of myself to plead but my great helplessness and Thy great mercy; and would ask Thee not to speak the word only, but that Thou wouldst come unto me, and abide with me for ever.

SECTION XIII

THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIN

“And it came to pass, that on the following day He was going to a city called Nain; and there were going with Him many of His disciples, and much people” (Luke). It was but yesterday that our Lord came to Capernaum after His long absence, and His stay there was too short to draw on Him the attention of the Pharisees, who were, on His last being there, conspiring with the Herodians

to kill Him. He is now, on the next day, entering a village within two miles, as St. Jerome states, distant from Mount Tabor, and near Endor: Origen speaks of it as on Mount Hermon³; Maundrel places it at the foot of Mount Hermon, and a little below Endor, where the witch was consulted by Saul, and not very far from "that ancient river, the river Kishon."

The following circumstance is recorded by St. Luke, with no allusion to it in the other Gospels; and is not only remarkable in itself from the greatness of the miracle, but also from its differing in two prominent points from the analogy of our Lord's usual dealings. In the first place, as being granted without any previous request or confession of faith. Such instances are very rare. When our Lord raised the daughter of Jairus, He came by request, and supported the father of the child in his faith; and Lazarus was raised after much entreaty, and a full, though struggling belief; but here our Lord comes uninvited, and works the miracle unasked. And, secondly, it is remarkable that so great a miracle is wrought—not before a chosen few, as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, with the charge that no one should know of it, or as at the Transfiguration, but expressly before much people; for a great multitude was with Him, and there was a great crowd with the funeral that met Him. These two points run into each other, and may be considered together. He Who had all times and events in His hand, knew whom He at this moment would meet, and the hearts that were suited to witness this. He not only "heareth prayer" when expressed, but "the sorrowful sighing" comes before Him. Their very sorrow pleads for mourners with a voice which God hears. "Lord,

³ Select. in Psal. lxxxix. 13.

Thou hast heard the desire of the poor, Thou preparast their heart, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto." Though He requires us to seek Him, and waits for us to ask, yet He Himself, unentreated, will sometimes come to meet us, by some intervention of His providence or His grace. Nor is it only the disposition of the heart which is spoken of as bringing down His mercy, but likewise an outward condition of need; not "the poor in spirit" only, but the "poor" also have the blessing, and they "that weep:" a state of helplessness has an effectual claim on that mercy which is vouchsafed to the prayer of the heart. The miracle is marked with great compassion for the destitute state of the childless widow, which comes out in the account with a peculiar emphasis; for it states, that "when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her;" and when the young man is restored, it is added, "and He gave him to his mother;" to which there is nothing similar recorded after any other miracle. Add to which, that, perhaps, not the weeping only of the mother, but her ceasing from tears at our Lord's word, may have been the required evidence of faith, for it often is as much so as any appeal of tears. And with regard to the publicity of the miracle, and the state of the spectators, the stopping of a solemn procession at His will was of itself an act of faith. It was, moreover, a pious work in which they were engaged, in consoling the widow and taking care of the dead. If distress makes men meet to receive mercy, and a funeral of such bereavement brings home to all a sense of mortality, these persons may have had their hearts open to understand, and may differ from those who, on another occasion it is said, "laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead," and whom He did not admit to behold His raising her to

life. But the whole subject is of such a nature, that it can only be open to Him Who trieth the hearts and reins, and knoweth the prayer and the faith of the secret spirit, so that there is no occasion to consider this as amounting even to that exception, which is said to prove the general truth of an acknowledged rule. It may be added, that immediately after this, our Lord, in speaking to John's disciples, mentions it among the things which they "heard and saw," that "the dead are raised;" so that this, and perhaps other instances of the kind, were then well known.

"And as He drew nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out;" for the places of sepulture were outside the cities, like the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, wherein Christ was laid. The dead man was *"the only son of his mother, and she was a widow,"* like the blessed Mother of our Lord when the sword pierced her soul. *"And much people of the city was with her."* it is not said with the funeral, but "with her," for the woman herself is the prominent object in the miracle. *"And the Lord, when He saw her, had compassion on her."* With bowels of compassion as the Son of Man, at the sight of one so afflicted, and having for His attribute, "Who comforteth those that are cast down;" Who declareth His almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; and so moved was He at such a sight on a like occasion, that when He saw Mary "weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled," and He Himself "wept" with them. "He had compassion, and said unto her, Weep not." It is He Himself Who shall "wipe away tears from off all faces," when, as Isaiah saith, "He will swallow up death in victory⁴:" it is

⁴ Isa. xxv. 8.

in anticipation of that time when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying." In like manner by His Prophet does He address the weeping Rachel: "Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears⁵:" and the same comfort is held out to faith which is here given to sight, for "they shall come again from the land of the enemy." When the Lord says, "Weep not," He takes away at the same time all cause for tears. Thus to Mary Magdalene, at His own grave: "Woman, why weepest thou?" Thus on raising Jairus' daughter: "Why weep ye⁶?" or, as another Evangelist gives the same, "Weep not⁷." And the mode in which He speaks of death on these occasions is equivalent to this expression of "Weep not;" as "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth;" "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

"*And He came and touched the bier.*" In our Lord's burial there appears to have been no coffin, nor any allusion to one in the raising of Lazarus; but it seems to have been the custom to carry the dead on a bier, without a coffin, as is now the case in the East, but where the bier is made in that shape; which may account for the circumstance, that in the Latin, the term for bier (*loculus*) seems to express a coffin likewise⁸. But why did He "touch" the bier? By the mere action of stopping the funeral; but the term so often occurs, that it must have a further meaning also: for the same reason, perhaps, that at the Transfiguration—that great type of the Resurrection of the body—the disciples were heavy with sleep, until He "came and touched them;" as if some communication

⁵ Jer. xxxi. 16.

⁶ Mark v. 39.

⁷ Luke viii. 52.

⁸ And in Greek, *σόρος ὅστ' ἔα ἀμφικαλύπτει*, Hom. "Arca in qua mortuus ponitur, quod jam sarcophagum vocant. *σόρος* Græce." Aug. de Civ. Dei, xviii. 5.

of the touch of the Son of God gave life to our mortal bodies. Thus, in the other case of raising the dead, "He took her by the hand, and said, Maid, arise." And, perhaps, for the same reason that in healing diseases also, which are the forerunners of death, He does the same; as He touched the leper; He touched the hand of one ill with a fever⁹, and the eyes that were blind¹, and the ear that was deaf, and the tongue that was dumb²; and as "many as touched Him were made whole." In the Law it was the "touch" that communicated uncleanness; it is the touch of holiness and life which may communicate the same³. It is remarkable, that both Elijah in raising the son of the widow of Sarepta, stretched himself three times upon the dead body⁴; and Elisha also, in restoring the Shunammite's son, laid himself upon the body⁵; and St. Paul likewise, in raising Eutychus; which seems to indicate, that when the dead arise, it is a holy and living body that shall communicate itself. But here it is not the dead that He touches, but the bier; like the staff of Elisha, laid on the dead child; He touches us—but through the wood of His cross; His communication of Himself to us is through the dead, and dead-bearing, but life-giving wood. It is His Godhead that uses His human body in working miracles—the Manhood taken into God, and full of healing. "It is the body of life," says St. Cyril, "and the flesh of the Omnipotent Word, Whose power it possesses. For as iron applied to fire does the work of fire, so the flesh, when it is united to the Word, which quickens all things, becomes itself also quickening, and the banisher of death⁶." It was He, Who, by His death, shall give birth to life. "It

⁹ Matt. viii. 15.

² Mark vii. 33.

⁴ 1 Kings xvii. 21.

¹ Matt. ix. 29.

³ See Nativity, p. 499.

⁵ 2 Kings iv. 34.

⁶ Aur. Cat.

was life," says St. Chrysostom with great eloquence, "meeting death that stopped the bier."

"*And they that bare it stood still,*" in wonder, no doubt, at an interruption so strange, and yet, likewise, in faith and veneration for Him that spake. "*And,*" with His hand thus on the bier, "*He called and said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*" "I say unto thee,"—emphatic words, distinguishing our Lord's action from other miracles that are done in His Name; as that of Peter, in raising Tabitha, when "he kneeled down and prayed;" as Elijah also, on a like occasion. "*And the dead man sat up, and began to speak.*" As in the other case, "He commanded to give her meat⁷;" so here he "began to speak," as proof of his returning life, and, perhaps, to acknowledge his Deliverer. "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "*And He gave him to his mother;*" gave again, as alive from the dead, him whom He had Himself given her of old—now lost, and found, and soon again to die; but the sign of a better gift when he "shall come again from the land of the enemy." "*And fear came on all, and they glorified God.*" Fear, which is here connected with glorifying God, is in another place put with joy: "They hastened from the sepulchre with fear and great joy⁸." Thus to rejoice in God with trembling is the right temper of Christians at all times; and even of saints in heaven the song is, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name⁹?" "They glorified God, *saying that a great Prophet is risen up among us:*" One endowed with miraculous gifts as coming from God, like the prophets of old; as the disciples going to Emmaus said, "a Prophet mighty in deed and word;" and as after the miracle of the loaves they said that He was "that Prophet that should come;" and the man whose eyes He

⁷ Luke viii. 55.

⁸ See Resurrection, p. 113.

⁹ Rev. xv. 4.

opened, that He was "a Prophet." Yet more than this do they confess, "*And that God hath visited His people,*" as in the hymn of Zacharias, that He hath "visited and redeemed His people;" for such were an infallible proof of the presence of Him "Who quickeneth the dead;" as Nicodemus said, "No man can do these miracles which Thou doest except God be with him." "*And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about*" (Luke).

This miracle speaks of consolation on every burial of the dead: when He saw the woman "He had compassion on her." He cannot be far from any like occasion of bereavement, saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Our Lord teaches us Resurrection, as St. Gregory Nyssen observes, not so much by words as by works; and this He does, not only by raising the dead, but also in removing diseases, by which He prepares our minds to higher degrees of faith; and thus, in His last miracle of healing the grievous sickness of the centurion's servant, "He verged," observes the same writer, "on the power of the Resurrection¹;" from which He proceeds to a fuller manifestation in this instance. The cases of His raising the dead in the Gospel history are but three, although it is supposed by St. Augustin that there were many others not recorded²; but these, or the knowledge of these, is sufficient to set forth Christ as the Lord of Life and death; that as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, and to communicate it to whom He will.

Another lesson which this miracle conveys, is one addressed, not to the bereaved mourner only, but to all

¹ ARR. CAT.

² Serm. de Temp. xcviij.

persons at all times, in that it speaks of Resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness by the power of Christ; in some sense, no doubt, this can be applied to the healing of the soul, though the depth, power, and fulness with which it is required to be done, may be a mystery in the soul's conversion. Death is called the King of Terrors: our mortal nature knows no fear greater than the fear of death; and the Holy Spirit, in likening sin to death, would have us look on it with this terror. For Scripture takes away its name from death, and calls it sleep, and gives the name of death to a state of sin. This miraculous speaking, then, from Heaven by raising the dead, must needs have its echoes in all the moral nature of man.

Thus St. Ambrose, in his Commentary, carries on throughout his allusions to spiritual death; and St. Augustin draws an elegant exposition of the three instances of raising the dead which Scripture records, in applying them to the three states of the sinner: whether, as the maid in the house, the spirit be dead by internal consenting to sin; or it proceed to outward act, as the dead body of the young man carried forth to burial; or be buried in the grave four days, by an inveterate continuance in sin, corrupt and noisome; while evil custom lies as a stone upon the grave, and its old sinful habits, like grave-clothes, wrap round the dead. And both of these interpretations are combined in the expositions of later writers, as in the author of the "Vita Christi," and in Quesnel. It is, indeed, hardly possible for a thoughtful reader of Scripture not to carry on the application to that spiritual death of which Scripture speaks; all must do so, more or less, so that it becomes a matter of degree. St. Augustin speaks of such spiritual interpretation as if it

were a sacred language contained beneath the literal meaning of Scripture ; and that, as one who cannot read may admire the artistic skill and beauty of a manuscript, and yet not understand the meaning contained in it ; so one may behold with wonder the miracles of Christ, yet not comprehend all that they are intended to teach us ; while another may both admire the characters and beauty of the writing, and also understand their language³.

It is evident that things in nature are of themselves intended to be emblematic. There are three deaths, or death is used in Holy Writ in three senses ; that of the body ; that of the soul in sin ; that of the body and soul in hell. Of the first of these Christ ever makes light, speaking of it as if in fact it were no death at all, as " He that believeth on Me shall never die ;" or calling it but a sleep, as being but a shadow or image of the second ; and makes use of it but to represent His dealings with respect to the other death—that of the soul. Of all these alike He bears the keys, and of their opposites He is the Disposer ; of the natural life of the body ; of the spiritual life of the soul in grace ; and of the life of both in glory. And again, the signs of spiritual death may be seen in the signs of natural death, and a long chain of analogies might be followed out. The death of the body is denoted by a state of rigidity and cold, inability to work, incapability of feeling ; and such is the case with the soul, when it becomes rigid and cold, unable to do good, incapable of feeling the pangs of conscience and the calls of God. " They have beaten me, and I felt it not : when shall I awake⁴ ?" If this is the case with thee, whoever thou art, then thou art dead, and those bearers will soon carry thee out.

³ Serm. de Temp. xviii. 3. Par. ed.

⁴ Prov. xxiii. 35.

And who are the bearers that carry forth the sinner to the grave of sin? Evil habits, or, rather, what Scripture reveals them to be, evil spirits; or any of those things which are found in a habit of mortal sin; as presuming on God's mercy,—blindness to warnings,—trust of a long life,—consideration of another's sin,—or, briefly, hope and fear, joy and sorrow. There are but these four, to bear us into the region of peace and light, or down to the place below: hope set on things of the world; fear of its losses; joy in their possession; sorrow in the absence of them;—these bear the soul in the bier, which is, says Bede, a dead conscience: wherein, as in a bed, is laid one lost in mortal sin; unless Christ in His mercy should meet it, and touch the bier, and say, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." The sinner shall arise and speak, making confession of his sins; and He shall give her lost child again to his widowed mother, the Church. The season of man's helplessness is that of God's interference. "No one," says St. Augustin, "so readily awakens another from the bed, as Christ does from the grave⁵." "What is that grave," says St. Ambrose, "but evil morals? From this sepulchre Christ delivereth thee; from this grave shalt thou rise again, if thou hearest the Word of God. But if thy sin be so grievous that thou canst not thyself wash it out with the tears of thine own repentance, let thy mother, the Church, weep for thee, who intercedes in behalf of each as a widow for her only son,—sympathizing with a spiritual grief when she sees her children borne to the grave by deadly sins. Let the holy Mother weep, and much people stand by, sympathizing with the good parent. Now from thy bier shalt thou arise; now from thy sepulchre shalt thou be delivered. The

⁵ Serm. de Temp. xviii.

attendants that were bearing thee shall stand still ; thou shalt begin to speak words of life ; all shall fear, for by the example of one, many shall be reformed. They shall praise God, Who hath granted us such remedies for escaping death⁶."

What widow weeping for an only son can feel that bitterness which the sinner ought to feel for his soul? Leave me not, O Lord, to be buried in oblivion of Thee ; for "the dead cannot praise Thee ;" but come to meet me by Thy providence, and touch the bier, and let me hear Thy sweet consoling Voice, and be strengthened by Thy grace again to rise ; that as by miracle I am made partaker of the first Resurrection, I may become partaker of the second also, and hear Thy marvellous Voice, after which there shall be no more death.

SECTION XIV

THE MESSAGE FROM JOHN IN PRISON

It was while our Lord was making this circuit through the various cities of Galilee, after saving the centurion's servant at Capernaum from death, and raising the widow's son at Nain on the following day, that John the Baptist sent to Him. He was now in the prison, which, Josephus says, was in the castle of Herod at Machærus ; and, therefore, at some distance from the places hitherto mentioned where our Lord was. "*Now John, when he had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him*" (Matt.). Thus St. Matthew speaks in more general terms of the Baptist addressing Christ ; but

⁶ In Luc. v. 89—92.

St. Luke, as in the late instance of the centurion, more in detail: "*And his disciples brought tidings to John of all these things.*" St. Luke had just spoken of the report throughout all Judea of the last miracle. "*And having called unto him certain two of his disciples, John sent them unto Jesus, saying*" (Luke). It is distress and affliction which usually brings persons to Christ; and so it is now with the disciples of John; their present distress and approaching bereavement is the occasion of their coming. And the Baptist, as St. Hilary observes, may well serve to represent the Law itself, as proclaiming Christ, preaching remission of sins, and promising the kingdom; but now in prison, in bondage to the elements of the world, and at the point of expiring, it would send its disciples to the contemplation of the Gospel, and by witnessing the works of Christ, to verify and establish its own words⁷.

They came, therefore, saying, "*Art Thou He that is coming, or are we to expect another?*" (Luke). He that is to come is the very description of the Messiah. "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry¹." Notwithstanding the greatness of our Lord's miracles and doctrine, yet was there a remarkable absence of any full declaration respecting Himself, and a retiring lowliness which was unlike the pretensions of human greatness. "*When the men were come unto Him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that is coming, or are we to expect another? In the same hour He healed many of diseases and plagues, and of evil spirits, and to many that were blind He gave sight*" (Luke). So many and manifold were His miracles at this time, even when not recorded, that some of these things were done in their presence before they spoke, and of others the accounts

⁷ Com. in Matt. xi.

¹ Heb. x. 37. Hab. ii. 3.

were in all mouths ; and they had already brought word of them to their master in prison. "*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John what things*" (Matt., Luke) "*ye hear and see*" (Matt.), "*ye have seen and heard ; how that*" (Luke) "*the blind see (and,*" Matt.), "*the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed (and,*" Matt.), "*the deaf hear, dead men are raised up (and,*" Matt.), "*the poor have the Gospel preached unto them*" (Matt., Luke). For all these were such literal fulfilments of prophecy, that no one could reasonably doubt but that it was the Messiah of Whom Isaiah spoke, and, also, that the Messiah was no less than God. "Your God will come . . . He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing²." And the lepers too are included in that saying, that "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." And the dead also, in another: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." "Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves³." And "He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor." The coming of Antichrist, indeed, will be "with signs and wonders;" but these are works of mercy, those will be with all deceivableness of unrighteousness ; these are works of the Creator, not of the destroyer. Yet, strange and wonderful as these manifestations are, there is to be "the offence of the cross," for this also the Prophet hath spoken: "He shall be for a sanctuary ; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel." "*And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me*" (Matt., Luke).

Here the question may arise, Why did John send to

² Isa. xxxv. 4—6.

³ Ezek. xxxvii. 13.

make these inquiries? Could he himself entertain any doubts respecting the Person of the Messiah? This cannot be supposed of him, who, in the very womb, had acknowledged Him; who had his assurance confirmed by the two great Witnesses, hearing the Voice of the Father declaring Him the Son of God, and seeing the Spirit descending on Him; who knew from Heaven that He should baptize with the Holy Ghost; he who thus knew Him, before our Lord had by miracles made such manifestations of His divinity that all marvelled; he to whose testimony our Lord Himself appealed, as divinely sent to confirm His authority from above. But it may be asked, whether, as the disciples themselves, though they had acknowledged Him as God, and witnessed His miracles, yet were afterwards scandalized at the cross, so that even St. Peter should say, "That be far from Thee, Lord;" whether St. John the Baptist might not, in like manner, have had misgivings at our Lord's humble demeanour? But this cannot be supposed of one who had already known Him as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" who was himself in his life so conformable to Christ crucified; who was greater than those Prophets who had foretold His death, "as a sheep brought to the slaughter;" who had pointed Him out in this very lowliness,—*"There standeth One among you Whom ye know not."* Nor could his own imprisonment have altered the thoughts of the stern preacher of repentance. But mysterious as this incident is, it is perfectly in accordance with the usual teaching of Scripture: it was to two of his own disciples before that he had pointed out the Lamb of God. He must have been desirous ever since that his disciples should attach themselves to Christ; the more so now that he himself was in prison, and looking

forward to his approaching death, and could no more rejoice in hearing the Bridegroom's Voice. Add to which, that perhaps, as St. Chrysostom observes, the disciples evinced some jealousy of our Lord's increasing influence, while that of their master declined. And St. Luke's words are to be observed: "A certain two of his disciples;" two, probably, who, whether from being actuated by envious thoughts, or from suitableness to their particular case, needed such an appeal, or as suited to be witnesses to others. And the Baptist seems so far to have succeeded, that at the feast at Levi's house, not long after this, the disciples of John seem to be hearers of Christ's teaching, and associates of His disciples; while the occasion at the same time intimates how slow they were to be detached from that discipleship. It is, indeed, the custom of God thus to instruct indirectly rather than by full declaration,—rather by action than by words. John was, indeed, the herald and forerunner to proclaim Christ; but how? not by open annunciation, nor by miraculous attestation, but by preparing men's hearts to receive Him,—making the way ready for His coming in the hearts of men; by the washing, by confession of sins, and by inculcating repentance. Agreeable to all this his usual mode of teaching is his present conduct; not stating that Jesus was the Christ, but sending men to hear His voice and witness His works. He seems to say to them, You doubt whether this is the Christ, or whether you are to look for another. Go and see. His appeal to them is like that of our Lord Himself: "I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me." And here, again, our Lord adds to His works by implication: "Search the Scriptures; for in

them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." For His works are the fulfilment of prophecies concerning Him. If St. John did not say He was the Christ, neither did our Lord Himself say that He was, but both referred to His works. His usual conduct was such, that in their impatience they said of our Lord Himself, "How long makest Thou us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." In love, therefore, for these disciples who loved him too well, the holy Baptist seems to assume the character of their own weak faith and doubt, according to his accustomed gentleness; like St. Paul is wont to do, saying, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" and often adapting to his own person the tone and words of a weak disciple.

This general view of the intention and meaning of John the Baptist is the received and universal opinion of the Fathers, with the exception of Tertullian⁴; of St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Augustin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theophylact, St. Jerome, St. Gregory. And, indeed, our Lord's own words that follow seem sufficient to explain it in this sense. It is, indeed, certain, that, as St. Hilary says, "he who, as forerunner, proclaimed Christ's coming; as Prophet, knew Him when He stood before him; and worshipped Him, as confessor, when He came to him, could not fall into error from such abundant knowledge." And again: "John is providing not for his own, but his disciples' ignorance⁵." And St. Jerome: "He does not ask as being himself ignorant; but as the Saviour asks where Lazarus is buried, in order that they who showed Him the sepulchre might be so far prepared for faith⁶." And St. Chrysostom, that it could not be the offence of

⁴ See Oxf. Tr. p. 267, and note.

⁵ In Matt. ad loc.

⁶ See at length Com. in Matt. xi.

the cross. "For calling Him the Lamb, he plainly sets forth the cross; as no otherwise than by the cross did He take away the sins of the world." And, again, St. Hilary: "that the blessing our Lord pronounced on those who should not be offended in Him, showed them what it was that John had provided against in sending them."

But as this mission of the Baptist now appears to some, as they read the account, to indicate doubt in the holy Baptist himself, so at the time that it occurred was it liable to be thus misunderstood, to the disparagement of John himself, and of his testimony to Christ: to remove any such impression, our Blessed Lord's words are now directed; not publishing, as St. Chrysostom observes, their suspicion, but adding a solution to the thoughts that mentally disturbed them. "*But Jesus, as they were departing*" (Matt.), or, "*when the messengers of John were departed*" (Luke), "*began to say to the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken by the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold*" (Matt., Luke), "*they that wear soft clothing are in the houses of kings*" (Matt.), or, "*they which are gorgeously appavelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts*" (Luke). St. Jerome well interprets it: "As the crowd standing around knew not the mystery of the inquiry,—and was supposing that John had doubts concerning Christ, Whom he himself had with the finger pointed out,—in order that they might understand that John was inquiring not for himself, but for his disciples, He says, Why went ye forth into the wilderness? Was it to see a man like the reed, who is turned round with every wind, and in levity of mind doubts of Him Whom he had before proclaimed? Or perhaps you think him

actuated by envy against Me, and that his own preaching was influenced by vain-glory and desire of gain. Why should he covet riches? Was it for luxurious living, when his food was locusts and wild honey? Was it for soft clothing, when his raiment was of camel's hair?" Ye went forth to the desert, ye have seen him and known him. Ye cannot suppose his own imprisonment or My lowly appearance to have shaken him. He appeals to their own personal knowledge of John, in like manner as He said to the Pharisees, "Ye sent unto John." A reed is empty and hollow, and, therefore, has no strength, but yields to the wind; as the Apostle says, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." Nor lived he in softness of body, for that renders the mind soft; wherefore, it was enough to say of the rich man, that he was "clothed in fine linen and fared sumptuously." Neither was he, as the reed, by nature unstable, says St. Chrysostom, nor had he become so by living effeminately. Persons shaken by adversity, prisons, and death, are such as live in luxury.

"But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet." Think not, therefore, that there can be any wavering in him. "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (Matt., Luke). In the Prophet it is "before Me;" which renders this change in the expression of our Lord very remarkable, as indicating Him that spake by the Prophets, and One with the Father; and is like the changes of Person in the Eucharistic discourses in St. John's Gospel, where He speaks of the Trinity. St. Chrysostom observes, that this very expression inti-

⁷ In Matt. ad loc. See Tracts for the Times, No. 80, 1. 7.

mates the greatness of John compared with the Prophets ; for "before Thy face" signifies nigh Thee, as they who ride near the chariot of kings are more illustrious than the rest. He was sent before His face, but so near to Him, that his coming was, as it were, with Him as an attendant, and one belonging to a kingly procession. As it is said of the highest angels, that they see His face, so he saw His face in distinction from the Prophets : they all were sent before Him, but he in the sense of nearness. "Many are the stars," it is said, "that precede the dawn, and foretell its approach ; but one alone has the name of Lucifer, or the Light-bearer, that which comes with the light itself." And more than this, for, as St. Ambrose says, "He prepared the way before Him ; not only in the order of birth according to the flesh, and as the Messenger of faith, but also as the forerunner of His glorious Passion." The Baptist is much more than a prophet ; for he not only prophesied of Christ, but welcomed His Presence in the womb, and pointed Him out,—nay, more, he baptized Him. If born and named under the Law, yet his very name and his life was Evangelical, Angelical. If his rough garment was of the Law, yet the honey from the stony rock on which he lived was of the Gospel ; his virginal life, that looked not for heirs, was above the Law ; his very baptism spoke of another and better Israel of God, and of the true children of Abraham. He was a burning and a shining light, the friend of the Bridegroom who rejoiced to hear His voice. "For" (Luke) "Verily" (Matt.) "I say unto you" (Matt., Luke), "There hath not arisen one" (Matt.), "There is no prophet" (Luke), "among them that are born of women, greater than John the Baptist" (Matt., Luke). This expression, "born of women," is remarkable ; "thus

tacitly excepting Himself," says St. Chrysostom; "for though He, too, were born of women, yet not as John." And St. Jerome: "He is set before all those that are born of wedlock, not before Him Who was born of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit." And St. Ambrose, in like manner: "Greater than all, but among those born of women, not of a Virgin. He was greater than those, with whom he was equal in condition of birth."

"But he that is least in the kingdom" (Matt., Luke) *"of heaven"* (Matt.) *"of God"* (Luke) *"is greater than he"* (Matt., Luke). There seems to have been two ways of understanding this, as St. Chrysostom and St. Augustin speak of it, according to a difference in the punctuation, whether it be "he that is least in the kingdom," or "in the kingdom is greater;" but it seems to be no doubt the former. A still greater difference of opinion is there about the meaning of the words. St. Ambrose and St. Augustin suppose that the angels are here signified, which are greater than John in the flesh, and, therefore, much more He Who is the Lord of angels. St. Chrysostom seems to take it of Christ Himself, as later in time of birth, or inferior in the estimation of men, but superior in dignity and majesty. St. Jerome speaks of both of these interpretations, and also mentions another,—that the least saint who is now with God is greater than he whose post is still in the battle. St. Cyril expresses another interpretation, that we, through Christ, have greater things than they who were under the Law, being made partakers of the Divine Nature. And certainly the previous comparison between those under the Law and those under the Gospel, and, indeed, our Lord's words that follow in St. Matthew, seem to indicate this; for He proceeds to speak of persons pressing eagerly into

the kingdom since the days of John. So great are the privileges and gifts granted unto Christians, which many prophets and kings had in vain desired to see. "There is none greater," says our Lord Himself, in wonderful confirmation of the angel's words to Zacharias, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord;" and yet the Baptist said of Christ, "Whose shoe's latchet I am unworthy to stoop down and unloose," or among Whose very servants I am not worthy to be numbered; so much is he who is born of water and of the Spirit, and admitted into the awful Name of the Holy Trinity, greater than all born of women.

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (Matt.). It appears, as Maldonatus observes, as if the force of this passage may be understood by transposing these last verses, for the meaning to stand thus: "Of all the prophets, there is none greater than John; but the least in the kingdom is greater than he: for the Law and the Prophets were until John, but from the time of his preaching the kingdom is being established." And thus it stands in another place: "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." But as the passage stands in St. Matthew, it has a reference to what follows, and may be thus taken: "From the days of John the kingdom suffereth violence; for he is the Elijah that was foretold at the close of the Law and the Prophets, which terminated with him." The expression of the kingdom being taken by violence, seems to explain the circumstance of its coming in a manner different from the expectation of the Jews. It is not the possession of a quiet inheritance, but, like

Canaan of old, to be taken hold of by conquest; not for the Jewish nation only, included in boundaries of a temporal kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom throughout the world, having in all places a strait gate that leadeth unto life, into which those who would enter must strive eagerly⁸. So that the Pharisees and the rich, who would take it easily, are left without, and the violent press into it. For no one can enter but they who do violence to themselves,—pressing earnestly, bearing the cross, carrying on a warfare, in which he that loveth his life shall lose it, and another shall take his crown. The more violence, the greater holiness, and the more abundant entrance into the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is here variously explained; but whether we consider it as Christ Himself, with St. Ambrose; or the throne of God, with St. Gregory; or faith in Christ, with St. Chrysostom; or the Church of God, with others, it will come to mean the same thing. “Great is the violence,” says St. Jerome, “for us who are born on earth to seek an abode in heaven; and to obtain by virtue what we have not by nature⁹.” From the days when John began to preach, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” even unto this time, by this violence is the kingdom seized.

“*And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*” (Matt.). Why, it may be asked, is this qualifying phrase attached, “If ye will receive it”? If ye are willing to receive him as such, he will be to you that Elias, inasmuch as he will prepare in you the way of Christ; and, by

⁸ ἀγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν. (Luke xiii. 24.) βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν. (Matt.) πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται. (Luke xvi. 16.)

⁹ In Matt. xi.

acknowledging the Baptist, ye shall receive Christ now coming in His kingdom. I say not that he is Elias in that full sense in which Elias shall at last be sent before the "great and terrible day of the Lord." But now he will not be so except to those who are willing to receive him : he is not so to the Pharisees, and receiving him not, they will not enter the kingdom. Therefore, our Lord does not simply say that he is Elias, but with a qualification, for John himself said he was not¹. And in another place, where our Lord speaks of him as such, yet He adds, and that too after the death of John, that "Elias shall indeed first come, and restore all things." That Elias is still to come before the last Day, is the universal opinion of the Fathers². But even now, not only did he come in "the spirit and power" of Elias, in a manner that required spiritual discernment to understand, but there were also external marks to attract observation to a resemblance ; for the austere life, the dwelling in the wilderness, the camel's hair, the rebuking wickedness in high places, marked another Elias so strongly, that this was one fulfilment. "I say unto you, that Elias is come already."

These words, "He that hath ears to hear," are repeated fourteen times in the Gospels, and wherever they occur they indicate something in itself momentous, and needing a heart to understand and affectionate desire to perform. Such is the very best gift that cometh from above ; so may the Spirit Which wrote interpret also to us that which is written.

¹ See *The Nativity*, p. 267.

² *Mald. in Matt. xi. 14.*

SECTION XV

THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST BOTH REJECTED

“And all the people that heard him, and the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him” (Luke³). The Publicans who received his baptism and entered the kingdom, showed the justice and wisdom of God. Believers justify God, acknowledging and setting forth His justice; unbelievers, by rejecting His truth, condemn themselves. *“And the Lord said”* (Luke). For the former words seem to be those of the Evangelist. *“But where-unto (then,”* Luke) *“shall I liken (the men of,”* Luke) *“this generation”* (Matt., Luke), *“and to what are they like? They are like”* (Luke), *“It is like”* (Matt.), *“unto children sitting”* (Matt., Luke) *“in the markets”* (Matt.), *“in the market-place”* (Luke), *“and calling unto their fellows”* (Matt.), *“and calling unto one another”* (Luke), *“and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you”* (Matt., Luke), *“and ye have not lamented”* (Matt.), *“and ye have not wept”* (Luke). There are but joy and sorrow—these two—and God speaks to us by both; in both ever finds something responsive in good hearts. By the sternness of the Law, —by the loving-kindness of the Gospel,—by fear and by love,—would He draw us unto Him; and when His appeals are in vain, *“Wisdom uttereth her voice in the streets,”* *“in the chief place of concourse;”* and even the

³ See The Nativity, pp. 215, 216.

very children playing in the markets seem to speak a lesson. By the fastings of the Baptist, we have spoken to you of "the Man of Sorrows," but ye answered not: by the mercies of the Gospel we have, as it were, sung to you the song of Moses and of the Lamb, but find no responsive movement in you. Neither the sadness of repentance, nor the joys of His kingdom, move you. There was "a time to mourn," but ye mourned not; there is "a time to dance," but ye, like Michal, Saul's daughter, are offended. The children "call to their fellows,"—they "call to each other;" for both Christ and the Baptist who appealed to them were of their own nation—of the stock of Abraham. But they are "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, and heareth not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." There is in the comparison or parable an exceeding sweetness or meekness, as of One that descended even to these little ones, and out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings perfected praise. When called to bewail their sins, they lament not: when called to rejoice in God's promises, they feel no joy. One voice speaks of the wilderness of the world, another of the table in God's kingdom, but both in vain.

But the expression, "They are like," does not, of course, signify that the Scribes and Pharisees here described are like those that sing or mourn, and meet not with according spirits, but that their case is like the case here described. Perhaps the best interpretation is that of its being a simple allusion to the sports of children. But some would explain the circumstances referred to, viz. that there was a sport in which children sat divided in two companies in the market-place, singing in parts,—one of joy, the other of sorrow,—to represent

the vicissitudes of human life, and then upbraided each other with want of sympathy. There is a touching beauty in the idea; for to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, is not of the world, but the precept of Divine love.

“*For John came neither eating nor drinking*” (Matt.). “*For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say*” (Luke), “*and they say*” (Matt.), “*He hath a devil*” (Matt., Luke). “*The Son of Man is come eating and drinking*” (Matt., Luke), “*and ye say*” (Luke), “*and they say*” (Matt.), “*Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners*” (Matt., Luke). This is the only place where it is recorded that they said these terrible words of the holy Baptist; though it is mentioned that they said so of our Lord Himself, that He had a devil. John came in the way of mortification and fasting, and men had to go to the wilderness to see him; but Christ, although He also fasted and watched, and had not where to lay His head, yet He came down and appeared among the cities and at the tables of men. The former mode of life, indeed, excites the veneration of mankind of itself more than the latter; but, as St. Chrysostom well says, “to be testified of by him who came this way, was the same thing, or even much greater, than to have come this way Himself.”

“*But Wisdom is justified of (all,*” Luke) “*her children*” (Matt., Luke). The wisdom of God in both these dispensations is set at nought as foolishness, and rejected by the world; but by them that are saved, by the wise who shall “shine as the stars for ever and ever,” it is acknowledged as the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. “The wise shall understand.” In these

there is a response found. It is enough that of her own children Wisdom be justified; she is ever condemned by the world, which, in condemning her, repeats its own condemnation.

St. Matthew seems now to proceed in connexion with the previous subject of the rejection of the Gospel; but this is so usual with him, that nothing can be argued from this of the period when the words were spoken. The same words occur in St. Luke, at a much later time in our Lord's ministry, on His sending out the Seventy before His last going up to Jerusalem, in speaking of the judgment which awaits those that rejected His ministers; which seems to carry on these very awful declarations to the Church of all times to the end. One would rather suppose that they may have been spoken at the later period; for as our Lord's lamentations over impenitent Jerusalem were not till the last, so one would infer that His lamentations over these cities of Galilee occurred on the approach of His departure from them. St. Augustin seems to think that St. Luke's is the order of time, and that St. Matthew introduces it as it occurred to his memory; or else, that the words were twice spoken,—once as here mentioned, and again as in St. Luke⁴.

“*Then began He to upbraid.*” On the word “began,” it has been well said, He then began, but ceases not unto this day. “Then began He to upbraid *the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if in Tyre and Sidon the mighty works had been done which were done in you, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes,*” as heathen Nineveh did at the preaching of Jonah. “*But I say*

⁴ Consen. Evan. lib. ii. 79.

unto you, that for Tyre and Sidon it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment than for you" (Matt.). Here the question may be asked, if Tyre and Sidon would have thus repented on seeing such miracles, why were not such miracles wrought to save them? Or, again, if Chorazin and Bethsaida shall have so heavy a condemnation after witnessing such miracles, why were they wrought before them? All such perplexing inquiries, which run up into "the mystery of iniquity," can then only be profitably entertained when they lead us to a sense of our own ignorance. It is sufficient for us to know, that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;" that "the servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes⁶;" that "mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented⁶." And very awful are those words, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Add to which, that in the secret counsels of God, there is a set time for all things. Christ was now sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; the time of the Gentiles was yet to come, when they of Tyre and Sidon should have the kingdom preached to them. Our Lord mentions the cities of Tyre and Sidon, partly as neighbouring cities, well known to them, and on account of the strength of the contrast as heathen cities; even among them as infamous for their vices and idolatries, and marked by the strong denunciations of the prophets, as Isaiah and Ezekiel; perhaps also from there being a sort of similarity, in that they were towns on the sea coast, like these, which adds force

⁵ Luke xii. 47.

⁶ Wisdom vi. 6.

to the comparison. Bethsaida, on the other hand, was the place of five Apostles, and of the four chief among them; and, surely, their prayers for their native place must have availed much, but, like those of St. Paul for his brethren in the flesh, were outweighed by their invincible unbelief. If Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, yet this would not have profited guilty Jerusalem; though Christ and His Apostles were there, it availed not for guilty Bethsaida.

“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if in Sodom the mighty works had been done which have been done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee” (Matt.). The expression of being “exalted unto heaven,” may well be applied to the Presence and manifestation of Christ; but it seems rather spoken of the spirit of pride and worldly prosperity; for in this sense it is used in the Prophet Isaiah, from which it is taken, where it is said of Babylon, “Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell.” But in the Prophet it speaks more of temporal ruin, here more of things spiritual, casting its shadow forward as emblematic of eternal damnation, and indicating that the pride and fall of nations is but a type of the latter, and of the case of individuals, wherein “he that exalteth himself shall be abased.” This type of the final condemnation is more strongly set forth in the “fire and brimstone” of Sodom.

These three cities had separate miracles done in each, of which the others may not have heard; but they are all

done, as it were, among us, so far as they are detailed to us; and, indeed, much more, for we hear and see of Christ risen from the dead,—of prophecies accomplished,—the full stature of the Church overshadowing the world,—the continued miracles of grace and the sacraments; and the import of these declarations is, that He thus upbraids or mourns over Christian cities that repent not, as knowing how much worse their condition is than that of heathen cities, and that it were “better not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” It does not appear that these cities were guilty of crimes in themselves so heinous as those of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, but that they sinned against greater light and grace.

The following passage does not seem to rise out of the last-mentioned words; and in St. Luke’s Gospel, though it occurs soon after in the series of the narrative, yet it is spoken on a different occasion; the former words which we have been considering being delivered on sending forth the Seventy, and the following on the Seventy returning with joy. The word “answered,” though not used in the sense we should use the term, yet seems to imply turning the attention to some circumstance in the mind of the hearer. “*At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight*” (Matt.). The expression is in form something like that of St. Paul: “God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart^a :” where the subject of thanksgiving is, that

^a Rom. vi. 17.

they who had been the servants of sin were so no more ; for the things belonging to their peace being hidden from their eyes, were to Christ the cause of tears, as on His last approach to Jerusalem ; and God had sent His Son into the world not to condemn but to save. But still we must bear in mind, that Holy Scripture attributes to God Himself blinding the eyes and hardening the heart, as indicating His judgments : and the judgments of God must be infinitely good, and, therefore, the subjects ultimately of our adoration. Thus the words, "Even so, Father," that follow, express perfect acquiescence in the Divine will. Revealing and bringing unto Christ, is here, as in other places, especially attributed unto the Father. But, as St. Athanasius and others observe, we must notice the punctuation between the word Father and that of Lord ; it is not "My Father and Lord," but "My Father, and the Lord of all creatures." The wise, of course, implies that worldly wisdom which is in other places opposed to the simplicity of the Gospel. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." "He speaks not of true wisdom," says St. Chrysostom, "but of that which the Scribes and Pharisees seemed to have, for it is opposed not to the foolish, but to babes." "Babes," says St. Hilary, "in malice, not in understanding, as it is opposed not to the truly wise, but to them who considered themselves such." These are chosen, for such is the will and calling of God ; and that which He wills must be a theme for endless thanksgiving : their angels in heaven see His face, and He Himself reveals His wisdom unto them on earth.

"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father ;" to Me from everlasting, as God ; or, perhaps, in this dispensation

as God and Man, as after the Resurrection, "All power is given Me in heaven and in earth⁹." "If we conceive of this," says St. Jerome, "according to our weakness, when he who receives begins to have, he who gives begins to be without¹;" but it is not so in this mysterious unity of the Three Persons in One God. "*And no one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son; and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him*" (Matt.). No one, that is, neither angel nor man; for this knowledge, as St. Hilary and St. Chrysostom say, implies the Father and the Son being of One Substance. Some think that this last sentence has also a parallel to be understood in the former clause, so that it should be, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whomsoever the Father will reveal Him." The same doctrine as in other places, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him²;" and the blessedness of St. Peter in coming to the knowledge of the Son is, "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven³." But St. Augustin, and apparently St. Chrysostom also, seem to understand rather that it is Christ, the Word of God, Who reveals both the Father and the Son. He is "the Light that lighteth every man." And, indeed, both of these, i. e. the knowledge both of the Father and also of the Son, seems to be implied in that answer to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father⁴." But the whole passage arises out of the former. When our Lord, as the Son of Man, had given such

⁹ Matt. xxviii. 18.

² John vi. 44.

¹ In Matt. xii.

³ Matt. xvi. 17.

⁴ John xiv. 9.

solemn thanks to God, as maker of heaven and earth, that He may not be supposed to speak as man only, the Evangelist records these His words, which speak of His being One with the Father. This is the explanation of St. Hilary, St. Athanasius, and St. Chrysostom. It is also suggested, as by St. Hilary, that there may be in it some connexion with what ensues; and, if so, we might supply the implied connexion in this manner,—“All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and whatsoever the Father hath given Me shall come to Me,”—and thus the invitation following:—

“*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,*” with the burden of this mortality, says St. Augustin; with the yoke of the Law, St. Hilary; but St. Jerome, with the weight of your sins: of which the Psalmist says, they “are like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear⁵,” and the Prophet, “wickedness” is as “the weight of lead⁶.” But rather, with Chrysostom, we should observe, “*all*” that are heavy laden, all oppressed with any evil or malady are invited to the Comforter. “Ye that are shut up, come to Him Who is the door; ye that are sick, to the Physician; ye that are shipwrecked, to the harbour of rest⁷.” Even we that have the first-fruits of the Spirit, being in this tabernacle, “groan, being burdened,”—but, through Christ, it is “a light affliction but for a moment.” And the yoke of the Law is heavy, and Christ’s disciples must fulfil that Law; but love, and the grace of Christ, render the fulfilment easy and the yoke light: and, though sin be a sore burden, yet he that is forgiven much loveth much; and, though every one must bear the cross after Christ, yet “virtue goeth forth from Him, and healeth them all.”

⁵ Ps. xxxviii. 4.

⁶ Zech. v. 8.

⁷ Vita Christi.

“‘Come unto Me; and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light’ (Matt.). This might appear to mean, ‘The rest which I promise in your coming to Me, is to be found in that lowliness of heart which you will learn of Me;’ for all disquietude arises from too high thoughts. But the meaning is more comprehensive than this; ‘Take upon you the yoke of My service, which you will find an easy one, for I am not a hard and imperious Master, but One that is meek and lowly, Who will supply all your needs, and descend to all your infirmities. Learn meekness of Me, and you shall partake of My meekness;’ learn love from Christ, and you shall partake of His love. Come forth from the severe bondage of the Law into the adoption of Christ; the very proof of which is, that His commandments are not grievous⁸.”

SECTION XVI

THE SINNER ANOINTING CHRIST'S FEET

ALTHOUGH the Pharisees were, for the most part, actuated by feelings of great bitterness, yet there were differences of opinion and character even among them; and in the following case there was some degree of good-will, as is shown by his inviting Christ to his house: he loved, indeed, while others hated; yet his love was but little, as our Lord Himself testified, and mixed with some degree of contempt, for he welcomed Him not with the tokens of

⁸ 1. John v. 3; see Aug. Serm. lxx.

an honoured guest; and from the thoughts that were passing in his mind, his object seems to have been to judge and ascertain for himself, by observation, whether Christ were indeed a Prophet. The incident serves as a remarkable example of what this Evangelist had just been mentioning, of the Pharisees rejecting Christ, while Wisdom is justified of those that received her, and the violent were pressing into the kingdom and taking it by force. It also arises with very singular beauty out of that most touching invitation in St. Matthew, "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and find rest;" while "the Son of Man," as He had just described Himself, "came eating and drinking;" is "sitting at meat;" and "a friend of sinners."

"And a certain one of the Pharisees asked Him that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee's house, and was reclining at meat. And, behold, a woman in the city." It has been suggested, that "the city" here spoken of might have been Nain, from its being the last city mentioned by St. Luke some time previously; but this is very slight ground for such a conclusion. If there should be any truth in the generally received opinion, that this was Mary Magdalene, it is more likely to have been the city of Magdala, on the south-west side of the lake; but when there is nothing to define it, one generally takes "the city" to signify Capernaum. "A woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that He was reclining at meat in the house of the Pharisee, procured an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind, weeping; and began to bedew His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment" (Luke). She glided in unperceived, and as one that ventured not to

meet His countenance, like the woman that touched the hem of His garment, came trembling behind, at the feet of the guests who were reclining, where the servants passed ; she stood, with dishevelled locks, and with weeping down-cast eyes, forgetful of all things else, in the deep sorrow that overwhelmed her ; she kneeled down, and bent low at His feet. It is evident from this unrestrained burst of piety and affection, that she must have heard our Lord's teaching, and that His word must have come home to her heart with power, so as to spring forth in this increase and fulness ; but whether He had made any personal appeal to herself, excepting with that eye which enters every heart, or had worked any miracle of healing on her, is not apparent ; unless it be she "out of whom went seven devils." This very remarkable action of anointing His feet and wiping them with her hair, is mentioned by St. John in that subsequent anointing of Mary the sister of Martha ; which has the appearance of its being the same person,—so that she should be designated by that marked description as the Mary that "wiped His feet with her hair." But the other affecting circumstance of washing His feet with her tears, and kissing His feet, is not mentioned in the latter case ; whereas it has a peculiar propriety on this occasion rather than on the other⁹. It has been well observed¹, that though many come to Christ under the pressure of bodily maladies, yet this is the only instance of one coming to be released from sins, and to express love. And why should we not, with St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, and so many others, take her to be "a sinner," even in the worse sense of the term ? Such a consideration adds much to the greatness of her faith and

⁹ See *The Holy Week*, pp. 6—10. See *The Passion*, pp. 404—415.

¹ Maldonat. in *Matt.* xxvi. xxvii.

repentance, and to the miraculous power of Christ's conversion ; well suited to follow the last miracle of raising the dead ; and, in contrast with the Pharisee, serves as a comment on our Lord's declaration, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you²." Her humiliation is very wonderful, as shown by her whole demeanour : she stands behind Him ; she sheds tears ; she washes His feet ~~from this fountain~~ of living water which His grace had opened : she anoints, not the head, as was usual, but, in the depth of her self-abasement, His feet only. She might with a towel, have wiped His feet, but instead, it was with the hairs of her head ; the long hair, which, St. Paul says, is the glory of the woman³, she lays at His feet ; yielding her "members," that had been "servants to uncleanness," as "servants unto holiness⁴." If the penitent thief is the greatest instance of faith on record, surely this of "the sinner" is the greatest example of love. Her whole demeanour is of one needing and imploring pardon ; of one that, in faith, hoped to obtain, and in that hope had already obtained, if not pardon, yet the foretaste of it, by love shed abroad in the heart. It is to be observed, that not only does the Pharisee call her a sinner, but the Evangelist speaks of her as such ; and our Lord says that her sins, i. e. the sins known of her, were "many ;" and His words to her, "Go in peace," indicate rather recovery and reconciliation, than the acceptance of a good deed from an holy person.

"But the Pharisee, who had invited Him, when he saw it, spake within himself, saying, This Man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of

² Matt. xxi. 31.

³ 1 Cor. xi. 15.

⁴ Rom. vi. 19.

woman this is *that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner.*" He was one of those whom the Prophet described, "A people that provoketh Me to anger continually to My face;" "which say, Stand by thyself; come not near to me, for I am holier than thou⁶." And he wondered that Christ was not of the same mind. But our Lord, in Divine simplicity, speaks in answer to his thoughts, showing that He knew not the woman only, but himself also, in a way that none but the heart-searching God could know. "That," as St. Augustin says, "as He had eyes on that woman, so had He ears in the heart of the Pharisee⁶." "*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee;*" I know the comparison thou art making between thyself and her, disdaining to think that she should be under thy roof. "*But he said, Master, say on;*" the word is one that signifies not Lord, but Teacher. "*A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty; but as they had not wherewith to pay, he freely forgave them both. Now, which of them, tell me, will love him most? Simon,*" not perceiving the application that was intended, "*answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.*" The debts differ in degree tenfold; yet the difference is not infinite, as in the other parable of a debt to God and the debt to man, which is ten thousand talents to a hundred pence⁷.

"*And He turned to the woman,*" who was behind Him, at the back of the couches on which they reclined, "*and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman?*" let her own actions testify between us, and out of thine own mouth will I

⁶ Isa. lxxv. 5.

⁶ In Psal. cxl. 8.

⁷ Matt. xviii. 24. 28.

judge thee : *"I entered into thine house ; water for My feet⁸ thou gavest Me not, but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with the hairs of her head hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss⁹"*—not one kiss on the cheek, which is the usual salutation of an affectionate host—*"but she, from the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. With oil,"* which is used in the ordinary reception of guests, *"thou didst not anoint My head ; but this woman with ointment,"* which is far more precious, *"hath anointed,"* not My head, but *"My feet. On which account, I say unto thee, her sins are forgiven her, which are many ;"* or rather, perhaps, *"the many sins"* which hers are supposed to be : *"for she loved much ; but he to whom little is forgiven loveth little"* (Luke). Here, then, it may be asked, Had the Pharisee but little to repent of? and this woman much sin in comparison? And had many sins been to her the cause of much love? This cannot be ; for sins repeated necessarily harden the heart. Or again, in the parable, is it the case in matters of human conduct that he loves most who has the heaviest debt forgiven him? On the contrary, moralists maintain that love is increased, not by receiving, but in conferring benefits. Both these, then, are to be understood, not according to a subtle logical accuracy, but as affectionately apprehended, in faith, by spiritual discernment. In this, as in the other parable of the two debtors, sins are spoken of as already forgiven to the Christian : both persons are debtors, or sinners, with sins forgiven ; but they are not forgiven without repentance and confession ; and sins cannot be confessed and repented of unless they are known and felt. It means, therefore, that he who is most conscious of sin,

⁸ See Gen. xviii. 4 ; Judges xix. 21.

⁹ See Gen. xxxiii. 4 ; Exod. xviii. 7.

and feels most the greatness of his debt to God, and his inability to pay it, in being most forgiven loves most ; or, rather, in loving more is more forgiven. And the parable itself varies in its application, in such a manner that nothing else but this spiritual interpretation can unravel it. For in the parable, he that is most forgiven loves most ; but it is not so stated in the parallel of the woman, but the reverse,—that, because she loves much, she is forgiven much. For the debt is felt and acknowledged according to the love, and according to the love it is pardoned ; and, therefore, either holds good, that because forgiven much she loves much, and because she loves much she is forgiven much. Thus “love covereth the multitude of sins.” Whereas the Pharisee loves little because he is forgiven little ; and he is forgiven little, not because his sin, but because his repentance is but little ; and his repentance is but slight, because his sense of holiness is so¹. Her sins were many, but may have arisen from the strength of passion, or temptation, or few opportunities of good ; but they had not hardened her heart against receiving the good seed, as was the case with this Pharisee. She had received the word of Christ, which purgeth and cleanseth the soul. Our Lord seems to say to the Pharisee, “Thou sayest to thyself thou art far better, be it so ; yet it is evident, from the circumstances enumerated, that she hath love, and thou hast not. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The highest angels in heaven rejoice over the returning penitent more than over the ninety and nine. The feeling of debt is gratitude, and in owing it owes not. He owes most, says St. Ambrose, who hath received most grace. And, perhaps, among man-

¹ See Aug. Serm. xcix. Par. ed.

kind the greatest debtor offends most ; but, through the mercy of the Lord, the case is changed ; that he who owes most should love most. And, therefore, says the same writer, since we can make no worthy return to God,—for what return can we make to Him for what He hath sustained in taking on Him our flesh ? for His stripes, His cross, death, and burial ?—since we can make no other return, “ Woe is me, if I love not. Yea, even were we to return cross for cross, death for death, yet do we make any return, as from Him, and through Him, and in Him, we have all things ² ? ”

“ When I think of the penitence of Mary,” says St. Gregory, speaking of this person, “ I am more disposed to shed tears than to say any thing. For who can have a heart so stony that those tears of this woman, who was a sinner, do not soften it at such an example of repenting ? For, considering what she had done, she knew no bounds in what she would wish to do. Amongst those that were feasting, she entered, an unbidden guest, and in the midst of an entertainment offered her tears. You may learn from this, with what sorrow she was burned up, that even at a feast she is not ashamed to weep ; but, beholding the stains of her baseness, and hastening to wash at the fountain of mercy, she was not ashamed before the guests. For so deeply was she ashamed of herself within, that she thought there was nothing without which she had occasion to be ashamed of ³. ” “ Blessed tears,” says St. Ambrose, “ which are able not only to wash out our sins, but also to bedew the footsteps of the Heavenly Word, that His goings may abound in us. Blessed tears, in which there is not only redemption of sinners, but

² Expos. in Luc. ad loc.

³ Greg. Hom. in Evan. xxxiii.

refreshment of just persons ; for the expression, 'My tears have been my meat day and night',⁴ is that of a just person."

But it is not enough that her sins are forgiven ; our Lord Himself, as on the healing of the paralytic, pronounces over her His absolution : "*And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with Him, began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?*" As on the former occasion in St. Matthew, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" By tears and by confession, which these tears implied, and by love, she was made clean ; but the Pharisee was as a leper still, though he knew it not ; nay, rather, the leprosy of her that was cleansed, was cleaving unto them ; for she believed in His power to forgive sins, while they murmured in unbelief. "They all," as St. Augustin says, "looked upon Him as man, and they knew that no man could forgive sins ; but she came to obtain forgiveness of sins, and, therefore, must have apprehended Him to be more than man⁵."

"*And He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee.*" He had before, pointing to her works, said that her sins were forgiven her on account of her great love, as testified thereby ; and here, that her faith had saved her ; it was, therefore, "faith working by love." "*Go in peace*" (Luke) ; the expression is, rather, "Go into peace ;" not, as on another occasion, "Go, and sin no more⁶ ;" but rather, as we may apply His own words, "Peace be unto you ; My peace I give you ; not as the world giveth give I unto you." Peace, i. e. as Theophylact says, in righteousness, or the reconciliation of man with God.

⁴ Ps. xlii. 3.

⁵ Serm. xcix. 7.

⁶ John viii. 11.

Her grief had come on like a heavy storm from noxious vapours, and the voice of God within her seemed to speak in thunder, and the heavy tears fell, and the lightning of His countenance and words seemed to bathe her heart within with light; and now, calm and refreshed, a serene sky breaks forth on the noon of her days. Happy they who worthily lament their sins, and, acknowledging their wretchedness, are moved with such godly sorrow, that their tears and their repentance may be like hers.

SECTION XVII

CIRCUIT THROUGH GALILEE

“And it came to pass afterwards,” says St. Luke,—or, as the word signifies, in order and continuation with what he had been mentioning,—*“that He Himself went about through city and village, preaching and setting forth the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the Twelve with Him.”* This is a peculiar period while the Twelve are with Him; for previous to their ordination, we hear of His disciples being with Him, but not the Twelve: and they were “with Him,” as they had not yet been sent forth to preach, as they afterwards were; but they are now being prepared for that office by their attendance on Him. This their gradual training, Bede very beautifully likens to the eagle enticing its young ones to fly by little and little, alluding to that most striking figure in the Old Testament. *“And with Him also were certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils;*

and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered to Him of their substance" (Luke). St. Matthew and St. Mark both speak at the Crucifixion of the women that followed Him from Galilee, and ministered unto Him. Thus, as our Lord was born of a woman, so was He by women supported. Thus hath God chosen the weak things of the world to confound those that are mighty. For Apostles he chose illiterate fishermen; for disciples, publicans and sinners; little children to celebrate His coming; for attendants, women; for His friends, the sick and afflicted. With respect to St. Mary Magdalene, one could hardly have supposed from the context, that the woman described in the last chapter should be here again introduced by a mention so different and distinct; or that one whose approach had just before given such offence in a private house, should now be the attendant of our Lord's public ministry, and pre-eminently so among other wealthy women dispensing to Him of their substance. The description of her as one out of whom had gone seven devils, is the same as that given of her by St. Mark at the Resurrection; or rather, St. Mark states expressly what is here implied, that our Lord had cast out the seven devils. There appears no reason why this should not have been, like others of the kind, a mere bodily possession; but St. Gregory, in his Homilies, taking the seven indefinitely, explains it as meaning all vices. It is, however, a strong and palpable representation of that spiritual possession, when, as in the parable, the evil spirit takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, to dwell in the heart of the relapsed penitent sinner. And thus, while He went from place to place, establishing His kingdom, and showing almighty

miraculous power at every step, He was supported by charitable women, as the poorest and most dependent of His creatures; not as though He needed any thing; but while the poor received His blessings, to them that were rich He afforded these opportunities of entering His kingdom by charity: "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat."

PART II

Christ with the Twelve

“They say of Me, Doth He not speak parables?”

SECTION I

THE DEMONIAK HEALED AT CAPERNAUM

THE mode in which St. Mark here again joins the Harmony is remarkable, and requires explanation; for after mentioning the appointment of the Twelve Apostles, he proceeds, as it were in a continued narrative, to speak of their entering into “a house,” which appears to be the accustomed house at Capernaum, which St. Mark more than once thus speaks of; and then proceeds to the account of “the Scribes from Jerusalem” bringing the charge of casting out devils through Beelzebub, where he again falls in with St. Luke, or, if we may use the expression, overtakes him. St. Mark says, in short, He had ordained the Twelve, and was now in the house at Capernaum; but between the former and the latter circumstance much had occurred. We find that on first coming down from the mountain, to which He had sum-

moned the Apostles, He held His Sermon on the Plain, and afterwards entered Capernaum, where He was met by the friends of the Centurion; on the following day He was at Nain, and afterwards the disciples came to Him from John the Baptist. He is next spoken of as anointed in the Pharisee's house; and there is then a general and short mention of a circuit through the villages and towns of Galilee with the Twelve, and the ministering women; when He now again is found to be entering Capernaum. But in addition to the intervening circumstances recorded, the fresh and new gathering of the crowd which St. Mark alludes to, clearly indicates that the former crowds had dispersed, and that some time must have intervened after the previous narrative. Our Lord had, perhaps, been to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, or on some other great occasion; and, indeed, the presence of the Scribes from Jerusalem seems to indicate that it was after some great Festival; for so we find on the last occasion, when the Pharisees, with the Herodians, conspired against Him at Capernaum, it was on His return from the Feast at Jerusalem; and it is likewise the case after the next Passover. St. Matthew's introduction also of what follows, is remarkable on account of that latent association of circumstances which often holds together the thread of his narrative respecting things that occur at different periods; as St. Augustin says of him in his Harmony, that he introduced things as the remembrance of them occurred to him. For after speaking of our Lord's previous stay at Capernaum, when the Pharisees and Herodians were designing to slay Him, he proceeds with the following account: "*Then* was brought unto Him one possessed;" the word "*then*" indicating merely a continuation of the narrative, there being

nothing more to connect the incident with the preceding, than the fact that our Lord was now again in Capernaum, with the Pharisees from Jerusalem watching Him and blaspheming; which connexion, though unexpressed, appears to have been in the mind of the Evangelist. But to return to St. Mark.

“And they,” i. e. our Lord and the Twelve, *“come to the house. And the multitude cometh together again;”* i. e. in a signal manner, on finding that He had returned among them; *“so that they were not able so much as to eat bread. And His friends, when they heard it, went forth to lay hold on Him; for they said, He is beside Himself”* (Mark). *“His friends,”* or they that belonged to Him. His kinsmen, here spoken of, may possibly, in this their coming, have some connexion with what is said shortly after of His mother and His brethren, who were without, being desirous to speak to Him while He is still in this house. For all the three Evangelists in a remarkable manner, and apparently without any mutual allusion to each others' accounts, mention their coming during the ensuing discourse. And it is mentioned in another place, that *“neither did His brethren believe in Him.”*

“Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw” (Matt.). *“And He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake”* (Luke). It was a “dumb” spirit that affected the maniac boy with such paroxysms of fury, which our Lord casts out after coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, addressing him by name, *“Thou dumb and deaf spirit, come out of him¹.”* There is also another mentioned in

¹ Mark ix. 25.

St. Matthew². In these cases, neither the evil spirits, nor the persons affected by them, say any thing. It is further to be observed, that, in this instance, it appears from St. Matthew that the sufferer was not only dumb, but also blind; unless, as some suppose, we are to consider this in St. Luke the same as the one previously spoken of in the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, for that is not blind likewise, but only dumb, and the miracle is followed by the same blasphemy of the Pharisees. But St. Augustin adopts the same order and arrangement as we have done here, considering this the same as that in St. Luke, from its immediate connexion with what follows³. The remarkable point in these cases is, that sometimes the afflicted person is mentioned as dumb, and sometimes the evil spirit possessing him. This circumstance, therefore, in Holy Scripture, intimates in a very mysterious manner that the person possessed with a devil becomes, as it were, one with him; a fearful consideration respecting the spiritual possession of the soul, that one so possessed becomes one with the possessor. All reflections on these miracles pass imperceptibly into the moral and spiritual. The devil, says St. Chrysostom, had stopped both inlets to belief, both of hearing and sight. But a stronger than he, we may add, entered in, and clothed Himself with the spoils, by turning all those natural faculties to the service of their God and Saviour. St. Hilary, Augustin, Jerome, and others, carry on this spiritual meaning, that thus, in the conversion of the faithful, Christ casts out the evil spirit from the soul, giving eyes to see the light of faith, and a tongue to speak His praise.

"And the people wondered" (Luke); "and all the people

² Matt. xi. 32.

³ De Consens. Evan. ii. 39

were amazed, and said, *Is not this the Son of David?*" (Matt.). The same was the appellation given Him by the blind men that were restored, and by the woman of Canaan; words by which they acknowledged Him for the expected Messiah. But this was the feeling of the multitude, in distinction from the Pharisees, whose envy seems to have been increased by the admiration of the people. It is remarkable that the reality of the miracles is not questioned; but some mode is sought of accounting for them. "*But some of them said*" (Luke); "*but when the Pharisees heard it, they said*" (Matt.); and St. Mark, still more particularly, designates the persons: "*And the Scribes, which came down from Jerusalem, said, He hath Beelzebub*" (Mark); "*by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, He*" ("*this man,*" Matt.) "*casteth out devils*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). The name is said, by Bede, to be originally the Belus of the Assyrians; and thence Baal, in Palestine: by the Moabites, Baalphegor; and by the Israelites, Beelzebub, as in derision. The name occurs in the Old Testament, when the king of Samaria sends to "enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron⁴." It is said to signify, "the prince of flies," from the flies that congregated in his temple, or as the expeller of flies. The figure it seems to contain is striking: flies congregate at the corruption of the body, devils at that of the soul. Who can expel them but He Who gives life to the dead?

"*But He*" (Luke), "*but Jesus*" (Matt.), "*knew their thoughts*" (Matt., Luke). "*And He called them unto Him*" (Mark), "*and said unto them*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*in parables*" (Mark). Being full of long-suffering, not dwelling on their wickedness, not provoking contention, He meekly expostulated, and that by

⁴ 2 Kings 1. 3.

parables, His gentle mode of veiling the truth, that it might as so veiled find access to them; yet, secretly, in the deep sadness which the Psalmist describes, "I do bear in My bosom the rebukes of many people; wherewith Thine enemies have blasphemed Thee, and slandered the footsteps of Thine Anointed." "*How can Satan,*" He said, "*cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand*" (Mark). "*Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation* (Matt., Luke). "*And every city or house*" (Matt.), "*and if a house be*" (Mark, Luke) "*divided against itself*" (Matt., Mark), "*against a house*" (Luke), "*it cannot stand*" (Matt., Mark), "*it falleth*" (Luke). "*And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself*" (Matt.); "*if Satan also be divided against himself*" (Luke). "*And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided*" (Mark), "*how shall his kingdom stand?*" (Matt., Luke), "*he cannot stand, but hath an end*" (Mark). These striking words contain an easy and full refutation of the blasphemous charge; but it is natural to suppose that, in this expression respecting a kingdom, a city, and a house, our Lord is delivering a canon, which, from the deep truth contained in it, becomes prophetic and typical. Perhaps it was true, at the time when it was spoken, of the kingdom, the city, and the house of Israel; for it was now thus divided against itself,—while the people were acknowledging Christ for the Messiah, and the Son of David, the Pharisees, on the contrary, said, It is the prince of the devils. Again, when our Lord speaks of divisions in families, which will be occasioned by the religion He shall send forth upon earth, this is to arise from the rending of earthly ties by the establishment of His kingdom, which shall break to pieces the kingdoms of the world. But again, in the higher fulfilment is the prin-

ciple to be applied to the kingdom of God itself; for thus holiness and truth, and all its privileges and promises, will seem to fail when the Church becomes divided against itself. The kingdom of Satan, therefore, still continues. Strange, that among evil spirits such union should prevail in working evil, as is scarce to be found among mankind! But He "Who maketh men to be of one mind in an house," must ultimately prevail.

"*Because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub*" (Luke). "*And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges*" (Matt., Luke). Many ancient interpreters, as St. Chrysostom, Augustin, Hilary, Cyril, and Jerome, suppose that by "your sons," the Apostles are here meant; and if we take the place as it occurs in St. Matthew's Gospel alone, it would be subsequent to their mission in which they cast out devils; but according to the received mode of arrangement in Harmonies, they had not yet been sent forth. And, indeed, the appeal seems more directed to something that the Pharisees themselves would allow, as occurring among their own children, or among themselves, in distinction from our Lord and His own Apostles, or such as we find did so in His Name. We know, indeed, of no authenticated instances of evil spirits being cast out excepting in the Name of Christ; nor is it necessary to the argument that they should have been; only that the attempt and profession was made by the Jews, and that, as a matter of course, it was always done in the Name of God. The appeal, therefore, may be only this,—your own natural reason itself, yourselves being judges, will prove this; for who ever attempts casting out devils but by the assistance of God? or attributes it to any thing else but His power? That there were persons among

the Jews who made a profession of so doing, is evident from the mention, in the Acts of the Apostles, of "certain Jews, exorcists," "the sons of one Sceva, a Jew." And it appears from Josephus, from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others, that the Jews did practise or profess exorcism⁵. The argument, as addressed to unbelieving Pharisees, is much stronger as referring to themselves than if it had been spoken of our Lord's own disciples, whose miracles they would have classed together with His own. They, indeed, who explain it in this latter sense, interpret this expression, "they shall be your judges," to what is said of the Apostles "sitting on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Yet, as addressed to those who would neither understand nor believe this, the other interpretation has greater force: as it is said of Nineveh, that it shall "arise in the judgment with this generation, and condemn it;" even so among Scribes and Pharisees, their own children shall condemn them; or, as it is said to the wicked servant, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." "*But if I, by the Spirit of God*" (Matt.); "*but if I, with the finger of God*" (Luke), "*cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you*" (Mark, Luke). Is come upon you before you are aware of it, as the expression signifies. "The Spirit of God," being thus called in the parallel of St. Luke, "the finger of God," is remarkable; and hence, in the ancient Latin hymn, "*Dextræ Dei Tu digitus*"⁶. It appears to have some latent reference to the Levitical law⁷, where it is said the Priest "shall dip his right finger in oil," in cleansing the leper. The expression has also a peculiar force from the place where it is used in the Old

⁵ See Hammond, on Matt. xii.

⁶ "In faithful hearts writing Thy law, the finger of God's hand."
—Eng. Trans.

⁷ Lev. xiv. 16.

Testament⁸: "The magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened." The magicians considered the miracles a proof that God had come to deliver His people. The comparison suggested by the parallel is forcible; for their own sons, who cast out devils, were as these magicians, and would allow it was the finger of God; but the Pharisees themselves were as Pharaoh. St. Chrysostom speaks of the whole passage as intimating, that "to cast out devils is a work of the greatest power, and not of an ordinary grace." And this is confirmed by another place, where it is said of casting out devils, "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting." The finger, St. Augustin supposes to signify division and distribution of gifts, which is by the Spirit. St. Cyril, that as the Son is called the Arm or Hand of God, this expression spoken of the Spirit, implies His consubstantial unity with the Son. For, as by the hand or finger a man works, so by Christ and the Holy Spirit are the works of the Father manifested; and as the arm or hand are of one substance with the body, and from both doth the finger proceed, so doth the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son⁹.

Thirdly, our Lord proceeds to show, not only that it cannot be the operation of Satan, but that it proves Satan himself to be overcome by one stronger than he. "*Or how can any one?*" (Matt.) "*No one can*" (Mark) "*enter into the house of a strong man, and spoil (his goods,*" Matt.), "*unless he first bind the strong man: and then he will spoil his house*" (Matt., Mark): or, as St. Luke has it, "*When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour*"

⁸ Exod. viii. 19.

⁹ Aur. Cat.

wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke). If I, by the Spirit of God, am now taking possession of the kingdom of Satan, it is a proof that I have bound and overcome him; and they that take part with Me shall partake of that power, and in Me shall overcome him. Dividing the spoils is a sign of triumph; "leading captivity captive, He gives gifts unto men." Thus, when on the conversion of a sinner the stronger Man enters into the soul, all the endowments of mind and body which before ministered to evil,—all the affections of love and hate, of joy and sorrow, hope and fear,—are sanctified to Christ's service. He taketh from him his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils. The devil is strong, not from his own power, but from our negligence: if we contend with him, we are stronger than he; for stronger is He that is with us. But woe to that man in whom he keepeth his palace in peace, where there is no struggle, but acquiescence in his power.

"He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Matt., Luke). So little agreement can there be with Christ and Beelzebub, or with Christ and Mammon, that in this warfare, not to be with Christ is to be against Him. If, therefore, these Jews gathered not with Him, they are, as He elsewhere says, of their father the devil. The expression here used appears to be a proverb hallowed to Divine use; and so is the opposite proverb on another occasion, respecting one that was casting out devils in the Name of Christ, when He said, "He that is not against us is for us"¹⁰. For the great truths of Scripture are often found thus involved in apparent contradictories. But there is in this case a slight difference in the mode of expression; for one is "against

¹⁰ Luke ix. 50.

Me," and "with *Me,*" the other is "against *us,*" and "for *us.*" In the latter, our Lord speaks of Himself and His Apostles, and intimates that a man is not to be considered an enemy because he outwardly follows not with them; and refers to that real union which must ever exist among good men that can cast out devils in Christ, even amidst external differences; the other speaks of that deadly enmity which there must be between Christ and the world, under whatever false resemblances and pleas of good. "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth." All is lost which is not done for Christ; so is every one that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God; for he gathereth, but not with Christ.

"Wherefore" (Matt.), "verily" (Mark) "*I say unto you*" (Matt., Mark), "*All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men*" (Matt.); "*All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemy wherewith soever they shall blaspheme*" (Mark). Even in this, the most awful passage of Scripture, is expressed the fulness of Christ's forgiveness. "*But the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him. But whosoever speaketh against*" (Matt.); "*but he that shall blaspheme against*" (Mark) "*the Holy Ghost*" (Matt., Mark), "*it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in that which is to come*" (Matt.), "*he hath no forgiveness for ever; but is in danger of eternal damnation. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit*" (Mark). The only excuse for such sin as this of the Pharisees, would be if it arose from doubting the reality of God's revelation, and thus to speak against the Son of Man¹; but if miracles are seen and allowed, and a manifestation of Divinity is made, and they

¹ So Jerome in Matt. xii.

still disbelieve and blaspheme, this approaches the unpardonable sin; it is to speak against God Himself. Who can help them, or how can they repent who do "despite to the Spirit of grace?" Although these Pharisees were approaching this sin, because no one in fact could cast out devils but by the Spirit of God, yet our Lord did at present conceal in great measure His Divinity, so that even for those who blasphemed against Him as the Son of Man, He prayed at the Crucifixion, as for them who knew "not what they did;" but afterwards, when the Holy Spirit was given and pleaded with them forty years, and they then blasphemed the Holy Name, it is evident that they had no forgiveness in this world, for they were utterly cut off as a nation. It is remarkable, that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and therefore especially as addressed to the Jews, the awful warnings on this subject occur: as that "it is impossible for those who were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance;" and that "if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment²." Hence Origen supposed that mortal sin after baptism is this irrecoverable sin³. But St. Chrysostom and St. Athanasius seem to think that these Jews were already guilty of that blasphemy. St. Augustin, who enters at length into the question, and considers it the greatest and most difficult inquiry in Holy Scripture, infers that it is "impenitence itself which is that blasphemy against the Spirit which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come." He says, "He who falls under the sin of impenitence, seems to resist the gift of the Holy Spirit, because in that gift

² See Hooker, b. vi. ch. vi. 15.

³ See Aur. Cat. in Luc.

is conveyed remission of sins. And, therefore," he adds, "it can be known of no one in this life that he has committed that sin." Moreover, it is not any blasphemy even against the Spirit, but, as St. Matthew says, "*the blasphemy,*" i. e. blasphemy of that nature or degree⁴. But in this mention of the sin against the Holy Ghost, especial reference is made to words spoken: it is "speaking against," and "blaspheming against," and the subject on which our Lord goes on to warn them is of words spoken, as proceeding from the evil heart: add to which, that where this awful declaration occurs in St. Luke in quite another context, it is of "speaking against" the Son of Man⁵. From this it would appear, that it is not only confirmed infidelity in the full light of the truth which is thus spoken of, but such openly avowed. Presumption of the heart increasing till it obtains dominion, and then breaking forth in the great transgression, as the Psalmist expresses it⁶. That the sin spoken of is something open and avowed, would appear from St. John, when he speaks of a man "seeing his brother sin a sin" which is not unto death: when he adds, "There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it." Whatever this sin may be, there can be no doubt that where God gives repentance, He gives pardon.

That this unpardonable sin arises from a state of the heart, is evident from what follows: "*Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for by its fruit is the tree known*" (Matt.). St. Chrysostom, St. Hilary, St. Jerome, and some others, take this to apply to our Lord Himself, as referring to the blasphemy of the Pharisees, and intimating that He

⁴ See Serm. lxxi. vol. v. Par. ed.

⁵ Luke xii. 10.

⁶ Ps. xix. 13.

may be judged from His works, and the evil spirits also from theirs ; but is it not rather spoken in the way of warning to these blasphemers ?—intimating that it is from deep inbred corruption of the heart they thus speak ; and thus it is addressed, as St. Augustin indeed supposes, to us all. In the Sermon on the Mount this expression is spoken with reference to false prophets, where their words are thus described to be the result of their lives. The imperative mood, which we so often find in Holy Scripture where we should have expected the future tense, is full of instruction to a thoughtful mind,—intimating that what is sometimes taken for a sort of fatalism or predestination in human actions, is in fact, the righteous judgment of God, blending itself with and controlling the same ; so that neither is the mere moralist right who speaks of the natural consequences of actions, nor the fatalist who ascribes them to an unavoidable necessity : Holy Scripture combines both views, but explains, corrects, and sanctifies them.

“Ye generation of vipers,”—a name applied to them by the Baptist, and afterwards by our Lord Himself⁷,—*“How are ye able to speak good things, being evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things ; and the evil man out of the evil treasure of the heart bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof, in the day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned”* (Matt.). The “idle” word some understand as calumniating, others as vain or immodest ; perhaps any thing that does not tend to edification,—as contrary to what the Apostle says : “Let your speech be always with

⁷ See The Nativity, p. 212.

grace seasoned with salt." "The idle word," says St. Jerome, "is that which profits not him that speaks nor him that hears." And much to the same effect Origen, St. Chrysostom, and Gregory⁸. It might be taken certainly in the worse sense, as in the expression, "the unfruitful works of darkness⁹," which the Apostle says we are to have no fellowship with, but to reprove; where the term "unfruitful" conveys a meaning far beyond the expression. But here the full force of the passage depends on its literal acceptation; for it is not exactly said that "idle" words will be condemned, but that they are to be accounted for,—as implying, that if all words, even extending to casual careless talking, will be brought forward in the Judgment, how heavily must weigh these dreadful blasphemies in that account? And the reason is given why words will have such weight in that judgment, viz. because they proceed from the abundance of the heart, and indicate its internal nature, as the fruits prove the tree. And we trust that they have such weight for good also even now; for prayers, which are but words spoken on earth, have power with God in heaven.

SECTION II

THE PHARISEES SEEK A SIGN

THE harmony of the Gospels becomes at this time much involved, on account of a difference in the order in which the same things or expressions are introduced in St. Matthew and St. Luke, while the things or expressions

⁸ Maldonat. in Matt.

⁹ ἀκαρπῶν, Eph. v. 11.

themselves are much the same. In some instances this is the case with single verses ; as, for instance, the Queen of the South is mentioned in St. Luke before the men of Nineveh, whereas in St. Matthew it is the reverse. Again : the parable of the unclean spirit waiting for an opportunity to return, is introduced by St. Luke immediately after the stronger man entering the house of the strong man, and the declaration that he who gathereth not with Christ scattereth ; whereas, in St. Matthew, this whole passage of their seeking after a sign is put first ; and good reasons will appear for keeping it as it is in St. Matthew—from incidental circumstances that indicate the coming of our Lord's mother and brethren immediately after that parable, as, indeed, it is in St. Matthew. And, thus, with regard to the expressions now introduced, St. Luke had mentioned the request in the order of the previous narrative, in speaking of the blasphemous charge of casting out devils by Beelzebub ; saying, "*Others tempting Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven ;*" but leaves our Lord's reply till afterwards, when it is substantially the same as that in St. Matthew : but St. Luke introduces this reply without any reference at the time to the question before stated ; merely saying, "*And when the people were gathered thick together, He began to say, This is an evil generation : they seek a sign*" (Luke). But St. Matthew introduces the question together with the reply : "*Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said unto them : An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign*" (Matt.), "*and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas*" (Matt., Luke). Some said He casteth out devils through Beelzebub—others asked for a sign ; having

answered the former, He now proceeds to the latter; or else, with St. Matthew, we must consider the latter charge as made rather later. The expression "tempting" in this place seems to imply evil design; it is in St. Matthew applied to the Pharisees in another place, where it is mentioned that "the Pharisees tempting, desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven." They wanted a sign from heaven, as the sun stood still for Joshua—went back for Hezekiah; as manna came down for Moses, and the thunder in harvest time for Samuel, or the fire from heaven for Elijah; something that might appeal to their bodily eyes rather than require spiritual discernment. Christ, indeed, showed greater signs from above than any before, as at His Baptism, His Transfiguration, and Ascension; but these are not spoken of as signs for them, but for believers. The sign for them is not from above, but from below. "He gives them a sign," says St. Basil, "not from heaven, for they were unworthy to see it, but from the lowest depths of hell; a sign, namely, of His Incarnation, not of His Divinity; of His passion, not of His glorification¹." They asked in the same spirit as that of Herod, when he hoped to see some miracle done by Him; but He answered him not. The miracles our Lord was working were in confirmation of faith, and granted to faith; and we find in the Old Testament that even signs were asked in faith and granted; as in the case of Gideon², and Hezekiah³, both of which asked for signs and received them. To Ahaz it is said, "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above"⁴—but he asked not in unbelief: "Therefore," it is said, "the Lord Himself shall give you

¹ Aur. Cat.

³ Isa. xxxviii. 22.

² Judges vi. 17.

⁴ Isa. vii. 11.

a sign." To the Jewish nation, as represented by Ahaz, there shall be a sign in the depth below, when Christ shall be three days in the heart of the earth; and in heaven above, when they shall see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. It is also most important to notice that a sign granted to faith is to salvation; a sign given to unbelief, as this sign to the Jews, is to condemnation. And therefore our Lord says, "No sign shall be given unto this generation;" that is, no sign such as they ask for, but such as they ask not for. Not that the Resurrection of Christ is to condemnation, more than any other miracle, but, that being the sign of all signs, containing within it the truth of all other miracles, it was more fully and signally to salvation or condemnation than any other: and in its power it was the destruction of their nation. It is remarkable that this expression of an evil and adulterous generation seeking for a sign, and none but that of the Prophet Jonas being given it, occurs word for word the same in St. Matthew again⁵, but the explanation is not there given as it occurs here. The expression is of itself full of mystery: the seeking for a sign is a proof of an adulterous heart which has gone away from God; but they shall see no sign except that which they will bring about by their own wickedness, and even that they will not believe; for, as Abraham says of them with reference to the same sign, "neither will they believe though one rose from the dead." It is and shall be the characteristic of these Jews, that they seek for a sign; and they shall, perhaps, therefore look to Antichrist coming in his own name "with signs and lying wonders." But the sign they shall receive from above will be to their condemnation, when "they shall see the sign of the

⁵ Matt. xvi. 4.

Son of Man in heaven," and shall "look on Him Whom they pierced."

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt.). The expression of three days and three nights, must be taken, as St. Augustin says, according to the scriptural mode of reckoning time, in putting a part of each for the whole; for our Lord was in the grave a part of each of these three days: being buried before sunset on Friday, it is reckoned as a part of that day; and, as our Lord rose on the morning of Sunday, that also is reckoned as another day, which commenced on the Saturday evening⁶. This will make three days. The specification in this place of both days and nights, of course merely signifies that day and night is put for a day, in like manner as the evening and morning form the day in the first chapter of Genesis. Many instances of the kind occur.

"For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation" (Luke). "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt., Luke). The expression of rising up in the judgment may refer to the rising of the resurrection; or may be a forensic term of men rising up as witnesses or accused, as in the first Psalm, "The ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment." The parallel case of Jonas preaching to the Ninevites, after his resurrection from the sea, seems to indicate that the condemnation of the Jews here spoken of, is from their rejection of Christ after He rose from the dead—when the sign of Jonas had

⁶ Aug. de Temp. iv. 6.

been given them : when Jonas preached through Nineveh for three days⁷, he was heard ; when Christ for three years preached and pleaded for Jerusalem, He was set at nought : Jonas said, "In forty days shall Nineveh be destroyed," and they repented ; Christ, after His Resurrection, pleaded by His Spirit with Jerusalem for forty years, but they repented not. And this confirms the view before stated, that for their sin against the Son of Man when seen in the flesh, they were forgiven⁸; while, at the same time, the expression of One greater than Jonas, indicates a sin proportionably greater.

"*The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with (the men of,*" Luke), "*this generation, and condemn (it,*" Matt., "*them,*" Luke), "*for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here*" (Matt., Luke). Nineveh from fear, the Queen of Sheba from love ; but neither fear nor love, neither the Baptist nor Christ, can prevail with these. As the parallel of Nineveh added force to the contrast, so does this of the Queen of the South. She a Gentile, coming from idolatrous countries ; these the Holy Nation, having the oracles of God : she coming from the end of the world to hear ; these stopping their ears against One coming amongst them ; she came to hear the wisdom of man, these refuse to hear the wisdom of God : when she saw the works of Solomon, "there was no more spirit in her⁹;" these saw the miracles of Christ and were hardened : she heard the words of Solomon, and said, "The one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me ;" these heard the wisdom of Christ, and said, "Why hear ye Him ? He hath a devil,

⁷ Jonah iii. 3, 4.

⁸ See page 152.

⁹ 2 Chron. ix. 4. 6. See also 1 Kings x. 9.

and is mad." St. Ambrose speaks of the Queen of the South as a type of the Church; and so Gregory Nyssen and others. From the uttermost parts of the earth the Church is gathered to hear the wisdom of the Prince of Peace, which is infinitely beyond all that nature had revealed. Perhaps the Ninevites may represent the earlier Gentile Church, and the Queen of Sheba that of later days; the Ninevites those who took the kingdom with violence, awakened by the terrible sign of Christ coming as Jonas from the grave: the Queen of Sheba those who came afterwards from all the ends of the world and brought gifts; when the Temple of God was being established, and the riches of the world flowed into it; when the manifold wisdom of God was disclosed, and Christ in His Church speaks, not as Solomon, of the mysteries of earth, but of the mysteries of heaven: of Whom it is said, "At Thy right hand shall stand the Queen in a vesture of gold;" and, of her, "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty: for He is thy Lord God, and worship thou Him."

The ensuing words in St. Luke are difficult to be understood, both with regard to themselves, and also as to their introduction here, and reference to the context: they occur in the Sermon on the Mount, but detached in their construction, being found there partly in one place and partly in another, and with a defined evident meaning, which does not seem altogether the same as is here intended¹. The light on the candlestick, here spoken of, seems to be the light of Christ in His Church, which, He intimates, is to come forth in full manifestation, and not to be, as now it is, hidden in obscurity. The figure

¹ See *The Nativity*, pp. 446—471.

passes from this into another meaning, where the light is not external, but that of the eye of the individual soul or conscience ; but in this there is no confusion of metaphor or analogy ; for the external light, and the light of the soul that recognizes it, are indeed the same : both are Christ, the true light in His Church without, in the Christian within. "The faith," without or within ; the grain of mustard, which is at one time the tree which from small beginnings becomes such that the birds lodge in the branches of it ; at another time, it is faith as the grain of mustard seed in the heart of man, which can remove mountains. Thus, when our Lord approached Jerusalem, He wept over it because the things that belonged unto their peace were hidden from their eyes. But this might either be taken for the external light of Christ's presence being withdrawn from them, or that they had lost the power of beholding it. The expression of the "candle set on the candlestick," occurs in another place in St. Luke², where, in like manner, the meaning passes from that of the candle without to that of the candle within. The connexion of this with the former seems to be this,—that although no sign was given to them such as they required, yet the manifestation of Christ would be sufficiently spread abroad, and not confined, as they now supposed, to a dark corner ; that, as Bede says, "Although He said there would be no sign to this wicked generation, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas, yet the brightness of His light should be by no means hid from the faithful." And then, we may observe, that our Lord proceeds to show that this light will depend on the light within. If there be this light, there will be no need of signs. "*No one, having lighted a candle,*

² Luke viii. 16, 17.

placeth it in a secret place, nor under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye; therefore, when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If, therefore, thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light; as when a candle with its brightness shall give thee light" (Luke). As the bodily senses are often taken to express this Divine illumination—as eyes that see, and ears that hear—so the body is spoken of as full of light; and these Pharisees, even when the candle is placed on the candlestick before all the world, shall grope in utter darkness, unable to find the door, having the light within them darkened; but in the faithful follower of Christ, there shall be a body full of light. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly³;" i. e. the light of Christ will show all the hidden man to himself. If this Divine light fill the whole body of a man, it will disclose all things. The expression, indeed, sounds like tautology, that if "the whole body be full of light," it will be "full of light;" but the meaning of the expression "full of light," is different in the two clauses of the sentence. In the former, it is applied to the body; in the latter, it is taken absolutely: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light;" i. e. if thy will and intention be right, the faculties of the whole man will be illuminated thereby; and then all things will be illuminated, or full of light.

³ Prov. xx. 27.

SECTION III

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT RETURNING

THE following parable is one of the most awful interest in Holy Scripture, which, from the subjects connected with its introduction, and the circumstances arising out of the termination of it, must clearly be put in this place, although it is not quite the same place which it occupies in either of the Gospels. As our Lord's parables and miracles often have a mysterious connexion, and, sometimes, run into each other, so this appears to rise out of His casting out the evil spirit, which gave rise to the whole discourse. Add to which, that from the peculiar circumstances of these bodily possessions so frequently occurring before their eyes, the parable has a force to them to whom it was first addressed, beyond what it can have with us who have never witnessed these sensible demonstrations of their possession. "*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest*" (Matt., Luke), "*and findeth none*" (Matt.); "*and finding none, he saith*" (Luke), "*then he saith*" (Matt.), "*I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he cometh, he findeth it (empty,*" Matt.) "*swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh (with himself,*" Matt.) "*seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first*" (Matt., Luke). "*Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation*" (Matt.). These last words in St. Matthew explain the parable as spoken respecting the Jewish nation; and the previous words of

“the last state of that man,” as clearly indicate that they are true of the individual. This circumstance, indeed, runs through the Scriptures. The history of a nation is the parable of an individual, and the individual is made the type of a nation. The first image in the parable is taken from a man leaving his house, and after wandering in various places for some time, finding it on his return ready to receive him, and so prepared to welcome his coming, that he enters it again with other guests. The second reference is the same image applied to an evil spirit, possessing the body or soul of a man. The third meaning is an application of the same to the Jewish nation. But there is reason to conclude, that in no case is it merely a figure, but a description of real circumstances, not the less real in themselves because figurative. The latter application is the one made by our Lord Himself. On the destruction of their city at the Babylonish captivity, they were brought to a state of repentance, and the evil spirit was cast out; but he was now returning to them with great power, and seven other spirits, and their last destruction would be worse than their first had been. Some speak of the evil spirit being cast out of the Jewish nation by the Law; and if so, in the seven evil spirits which afterwards possess them, there may be a reference to the sevenfold Spirit being set at nought. This may fall in with and carry out the application to the first and second destruction of Jerusalem; the one for the Law neglected, the other for the Spirit rejected. And thus St. Ambrose,—“As upon us are multiplied the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, upon them falls the whole accumulated attack of evil spirits⁴ ;” taking the number seven to represent the whole. It seems to imply hopeless recovery; unless,

⁴ In Luc. vii. 95.

indeed, the miracle of Christ's casting out seven devils should allow us to entertain a hope even in such a case, and intimate the restoration of the Jews at last by the brightness of Christ's coming. But the most concerning application to ourselves is the second, which speaks of an evil spirit possessing the soul. This is the case of a person overcome by some evil passion or habit, which usually, at first, is but one and single, and, after a time, he repents of it, but again relapses into the same sin; the whole man becomes then corrupted, for this sin combines with it many other sins. Lust, for instance, when the principle of self-restraint is lost by such a relapse, becomes combined with covetousness, anger, pride, envy, and other sins, which are all connected together. Holy Scripture reveals to us that, in these cases, this is the effect of evil spirits taking possession of the soul, which they find willing to receive them. "It had been better," we read, "not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn away." And our Lord gives the warning, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

But what is the meaning of the evil spirit "walking through dry places, and seeking rest"? And why is it that in the wilderness he meets our Lord? This is a mystery which no man can know. But it seems to indicate that the only ease evil spirits find from their misery, is in the hearts of men working evil. But to speak after the manner of men, it is descriptive of evil desires and propensities which have once had possession, and are waiting for an opportunity to return; and their restless importunity is expressed by seeking in vain for water or rest. Yet still, they are absent from the man while he is in a state of penitence. Or, it may be that the evil spirit

is endeavouring to plant his footsteps in the hearts of penitents, such as dwell, as it were, in the wilderness; but prevailing not, he returns to him who lives at ease after once repenting. His finding his former abode "empty," or at leisure, seems to indicate one empty of holy affections and employments, and not pressing forward in good works; being "swept," may signify his becoming free from the incumbrances and pains of penitence and godly sorrows, so as to be prepared for an evil spirit; and to carry on the same, being "garnished," or adorned for his entrance, would be indulging in worldly ways, that provoke and seem to invite temptation; so that he again falls,—falls into a state which it is impossible perhaps again to "renew unto repentance." St. Augustin, and some others, think that hypocrisy also is denoted in the evil state, as "garnished" with seeming good, and as having the semblance of the seven graces of the Spirit, together with the seven deadly sins which are opposed to them. And we know that this was especially the case with that evil generation of which the parable was first spoken; for these Jews were full of uncleanness, but outwardly "garnished" as whited sepulchres. The three things that tempt the devil are, idleness, appearance of sanctity, and pretence of virtues, the being thus empty, swept, and garnished. Although the first application of the parable was made to the Jewish nation, yet its most full and awful meaning is the obvious one which appeals to all as spoken of the human soul, which, when given up to wickedness, becomes the house of the evil spirit, as that of the good man is the temple of God. It warns of the danger of a relapse after grace given. "They enter in and abide there," with a continuance for ever, as in the expression, "The wrath of God abideth" on them.

SECTION IV

OUR LORD'S MOTHER AND BRETHREN COME TO HIM

IN reading the Gospel of St. Luke by itself, it seems difficult to account for the exclamation of the woman, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee!" which follows immediately upon this most awful parable. Such an interruption of our Lord at all seems extraordinary, and more especially untimely after that fearful declaration with which the parable terminates. But on referring to St. Matthew, we find, that after mentioning the last parable he proceeds, that "while He yet talked," His mother and brethren were announced as standing without; it was, therefore, on this being reported among the crowd, that the woman, on hearing the mention of our Lord's Mother, made the exclamation, at such a time most natural. And it is curious to observe, that both of these Evangelists, although speaking of a different circumstance, yet each declares that circumstance to take place while our Lord is delivering the foregoing words. "While He was yet speaking," says one Evangelist, "His Mother was announced;" "While He was yet speaking," says the other, "a woman exclaimed, Blessed is Thy Mother!" Both of these circumstances, therefore, must have occurred at the very same time; and they are so intimately connected with each other, as aptly and appropriately to harmonize together. It is natural to suppose that this association of things gives rise to the interruption; in the same way that when one exclaimed, "Blessed is he that

shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," the occasion was when they were sitting at meat, and our Lord had been speaking of inviting the poor to dinner.

"While He yet talked to the people, behold, His Mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak to Him" (Matt.). *"There came then His brethren and His Mother, and standing without sent unto Him, calling Him"* (Mark); or, as St. Luke introduces this incident in quite another place, *"Then came to Him His Mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press"* (Luke). While, therefore, He was yet speaking, there was a sensation created among the crowd by the report of our Lord's Mother being without, while in the mean time He continued speaking the parable: and it is to be noticed, that more than one is mentioned by the Evangelists as intimating to our Lord that they were come; for St. Mark speaks of the multitude, St. Luke of certain persons, St. Matthew of one,—so as to afford time for this intervening incident. *"And it came to pass as He spake these things,"* i. e. the parable of the evil spirit, *"a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and do it"* (Luke). This woman had no little devotion and courage, while the Pharisees were blaspheming, thus to confess Christ: it is as if saying, Blessed is she that bare Thee, Who art the blessed One, and by Whom we all are blessed. And our Lord's gracious answer gives the power to herself to become blessed even as the Mother of God, if her faith and love were to be such. On which reply St. Augustin says, "that to have conceived Christ through faith spiritually, was more blessed than to have given birth to Him from

the womb⁵." Elisabeth in prophecy had thus declared her blessed; but Christ Himself hath in all His Beatitudes declared the blessedness of those that love God.

The Presence, therefore, of our Lord's Mother, was being notified through the crowd from without, when this woman in the company by that exclamation gave rise to the above remark of our Lord, just before, or at the very moment, when the announcement was being made to our Lord Himself. Thus this incident is preserved in the very order of St. Luke; and circumstances indicate such to be the right order. For, as it has been observed, St. Luke says nothing at this place of our Lord's Mother and brethren coming, but only of the exclamation of the woman. But for this narrative of His relatives coming, which here occurs in St. Matthew and St. Mark, we have to seek for a parallel in St. Luke,—not on this occasion, but in another part of his Gospel: and we do find the circumstance mentioned by St. Luke, which is most clearly the same, without a shadow of doubt; and it so happens that where it does occur in St. Luke, it may be seen that it is introduced out of the due order of events; for the Evangelist is then narrating what our Lord said privately when alone with His disciples⁶; and then introduces this coming of His Mother and His brethren, saying, that they could not come near Him "because of the crowd;" showing thereby that it was not on the same occasion on which He was previously giving the account. On which passage St. Augustin says, "Luke has not observed the order of action here, but has placed this earlier as he happened to recollect it⁷."

"And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto

⁵ De Virgin. cap. iii.

⁶ Luke viii. 9. 19.

⁷ De Cons. Evan. ii. 40.

Him" (Mark); "and it was told Him by certain which said" (Luke). "Then one said unto Him" (Matt.), "Behold" (Matt., Mark), "Thy Mother and Thy brethren" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "stand" (Matt., Luke) "without" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "desiring to see Thee" (Luke); "seeking to speak with Thee" (Matt.); "seek for Thee" (Mark). It is remarkable how often St. Mark takes the expression of St. Matthew, even when he may use it in a different manner; as here, the "seeking to speak" of St. Matthew, is in St. Mark "seek for Thee." It has been generally supposed to have been said with ill intent, as interrupting, or tempting, or humiliating and depreciating; in the same way as it was said by persons who were offended at Him, "Is not His Mother called Mary? and His brethren;" "are they not all with us?" But it is not necessary to suppose it thus meant, though the presence of His relatives was in itself matter of offence to those who stumbled at His lowly birth and condition; while with others the Divine lineage which love of God gives, may remove that stumbling-block.

"Thy Mother and Thy brethren stand without!" Happy would it be for the Church if the mystical interpretation given to this were fulfilled; and they who sit in the seat of Christ and His Apostles, would let carnal relationships "stand without," nor interfere to impede the ministry of God's Word, and intrude into spiritual offices.

"And He answered them, saying" (Mark, Luke), "But He answered and said unto him that told Him" (Matt.), "Who is My Mother" (Matt., Mark), "or My brethren?" (Mark), "and who are My brethren?" (Matt.). "And He looked round about on them which sat about Him" (Mark), with a look which, no doubt, St. Peter feelingly remembered, and by

his Evangelist records ; and with an action which St. Matthew, who also was one of them, notices ; *“And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples”* (Matt.), *“and said, Behold My Mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will”* (Matt., Mark) *“of God”* (Mark), *“of My Father which is in Heaven”* (Matt.), *“the same is My brother, and (My,”* Mark), *“sister, and mother”* (Matt., Mark), giving us the very words our Lord spake ; but St. Luke more concisely and generally, *“My Mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it”* (Luke). But there is a peculiar and touching force in the repetition of the words, as narrated by the two former Evangelists ; it seems beautifully to fill out and further our Lord's declaration on another occasion, where there occurs a similar repetition of words with a force and beauty no less striking : *“There is no man that hath left brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for My sake, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children⁸.”* And here, in the latter corresponding clause of the expression, the omission is remarkable ; for although in the former part it speaks of leaving *“father”* and *“wife,”* yet it is not added that he shall receive these two ; but when the other lost objects are repeated, *“father”* and *“wife”* are omitted. How shall he receive again in this life these that he has relinquished, but that Christ Himself will be to him, as this passage declares, as brother, and sister, and mother ? The reason why our Blessed Lord speaks not of father in this place is evident ; and if the passages are to be considered with reference to each other, the same would account for both. Another observation arises from a comparison of the two passages, that as our Lord's own

⁸ Mark x. 29, 30.

conduct is often found to illustrate His commands, so His behaviour in this incident is a fulfilment of His precept in the other ; or of the same on another occasion, when He said, " He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." At the same time, the very tender appellation of endearment with which our Lord drew His disciples unto Him as His brethren, is in accordance with His words after the Resurrection, " Go and tell My brethren ;" or, as when under the type of Joseph He made Himself known unto His " brethren."

Three times is the blessed Virgin spoken of in Scripture as coming to Christ : first, when as an affectionate mother she sought Him as a Child, unable to endure His absence ; now, when she sought Him grown to manhood, as unable to be satiated with His Presence ; and lastly, she came to Him at the Crucifixion, when about to lose that Presence. First in the Temple ; secondly in the house ; and thirdly at the Cross⁹. But who our Lord's brethren are, that are here mentioned, is not evident : in another place His brethren are spoken of by name ; " Is not His mother called Mary ? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas ?" For James and Joses were the sons of Mary¹, and Mary the sister of the blessed Virgin² ; and Judas is more than once said to be the brother of James. This is the opinion St. Jerome expresses on this place, adding, that all Scripture shows that cousins are called brothers. But it is very doubtful whether these can be the relatives here spoken of ; for it seems probable that these who now come with the Blessed Mother, are the same of whom it is said, at a later period, " for neither did His brethren believe on Him ;" which could not be said of these four

⁹ Vita Christi, 316.

¹ Matt. xiii. 55 ; xxvii. 56.

² John xix. 25.

disciples, for they were already among the Twelve, who were probably now claimed as the spiritual relations who sat around Him. The motive for their interruption of His Ministry on this occasion is not evident ; it may, perhaps, be accounted for by what St. Mark had lately said, apparently by anticipation ; for it is on our Lord's coming into this house, at this very time, when St. Mark mentions that the crowd came together "so that they could not eat bread," and that "His friends, when they heard of it, went to lay hold on Him, for they said, He is beside Himself"—where the motive of their coming appears to be a concern for His welfare, as apprehensive of His being overwhelmed by the crowd, which allowed Him no time for rest or food ; and perhaps, also, not without fear for Him from the insidious malice of the Pharisees.

Our Lord's answer intimated the inestimable value of virtue as such, that the highest earthly nobility, even that of being the Mother of our Lord, was not to be compared to it ; it contained moreover within it the hidden mystery of His Godhead ; it was in itself the teaching both of obedience and of doctrine : add to this, that to His own kindred it was the best reply to the anxious thoughts of their hearts ; for from something of human affection they were desirous of seeing Him ; and His answer was consolatory and ennobling, as implying that there were duties He had to perform which were of an infinitely higher nature than any personal considerations. With all gentleness, too, in admitting those earthly affinities, He admits both His relatives and all that heard Him to the choice of a higher blessedness, which is given without partiality and in the power of all ; to be even like her of whom it is said pre-eminently, "Blessed is she that believed ;" "her who was worthy of honour," says Theophylact, "not because she

bore Christ, but on account of her being possessed of every virtue."

Thus was our Lord not setting aside His Mother and kindred, although He may have appeared before men to do so, but drawing them unto Himself by an internal spiritual relationship; if His Mother was chosen for the pre-eminence of her faith, and His brethren, it may be, were of His own disciples, or had power to become so, and out of themselves had already furnished four Apostles. Of which St. Hilary says, that He was "establishing Himself to all as the form of action and thought, that of all relationships the right and name was to be retained, not from the condition of birth, but from communion of the Church³." And St. Ambrose, that "being about to prescribe to others that he who shall not have left father and mother is not worthy of the Son of God, He first subjected Himself to this His own declaration; not to set at nought the observances of maternal piety (for it is His own precept, that he who hath not honoured father and mother shall die the death), but as knowing the greater debt that was due to the mysteries of His Father than to His mother's affections⁴."

SECTION V

CHRIST DINES WITH A PHARISEE

THERE is now introduced in this Harmony a continuation of the narrative in St. Luke, as it is contained in part of three chapters, the whole of the twelfth and part of the eleventh and thirteenth; it is here inserted not without

³ Com. in Matt. xii. 24.

⁴ Exp. in Luc. vi. 36.

some misgiving, as it seems to crowd into the compass of one day more than we can reasonably suppose to have taken place in that space of time. For there seems no reason why we should not take St. Matthew's words literally, when after the foregoing circumstances he proceeds to mention the parables by the sea-shore, which he states took place "on the same day;" whereas, these intervening passages in St. Luke intimate that in the meantime our Lord had gone in to dine with a Pharisee, and detail some lengthened discourses in succession after it. But the reasons for adopting this arrangement are, that St. Luke introduces this invitation of the Pharisee apparently in express connexion with the foregoing discourses, and there is nothing necessarily to connect his narrative with any thing ensuing at a later date. It is the order adopted by Newcome, though not, that I am aware of, by other Harmonists; except that Maldonatus considers that the invitation must be connected with what our Lord had been previously saying. It seems most probable that the sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house did now occur; but that the long ensuing discourses,—which, although associated in subject, scarcely admit of their being spoken at the Pharisee's table, and the greater part of which manifestly occurred amid the multitude without,—that these are here introduced by St. Luke out of the order of time. And this supposition will do away with all the objections, from so much being otherwise comprised in one day; as the eating at the Pharisee's house alone would not at all interfere with such an arrangement, but rather fall in with it, from reasons hereafter to be stated: and we shall thus adhere to the professed connexion and order both of St. Matthew and of St. Luke.

“*And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him*” (Luke). “As He spake” seems evidently to connect it with the former discourse; but it does not follow that it means while our Lord was speaking the words last mentioned by St. Luke, because the coming of our Lord’s relatives and the remarks respecting them occurred between, and after the parable just mentioned by St. Luke. This Evangelist, therefore, merely implies generally that this took place during these discourses. And so St. Augustin interprets the words; considering the immediate connexion uncertain, as he does not say, “as He spake these things,” but only “as He spake⁵.” And, indeed, the occasion of our Lord’s kindred coming to Him suggests an appropriate connexion between all the passages. For St. Mark had previously mentioned, that our Lord was so thronged with the people that He was not able so much as to eat bread, so that His friends had complained; then we have the account of the casting out of the evil spirit, and the awful discourses that ensued, and to these this following incident is attached in St. Luke. It is not well to build too much on circumstances so minute, but the interruption of a Pharisee “while He was speaking,” asking Him to eat at his house, connected with the mention of His brethren coming, and the circumstance expressed by the Evangelist that He had “not leisure so much as to eat” as the cause of their complaint, furnishes us with a very natural introduction.

“*And having entered He reclined*” at the table, i. e. He did so at once without preparation. “*And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed before the dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do*

⁵ De Cons. Ev. l. ii. ch. 86.

ye Pharisees”—the word “now” is often thus put to introduce an objection; not that the Pharisee had expressed this, but that our Lord, as St. Augustin says, read his thoughts. “Now do ye Pharisees *make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.*” This partakes of the characteristic of our Lord’s teaching, in turning the objects that came before Him to the purposes of instruction: “seizing the opportunity, and framing His reproof,” as St. Cyril says, “from the things that were ready before Him⁶.” It is remarkable how all the foregoing discourses are of this kind—after casting out a devil, He speaks of the evil spirit returning with seven others; on His brethren coming, He speaks of His brethren in the spirit; and now, in like manner, of cleansing the heart and internal religion. “*Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also?*” Did not He that gave the Law with washings and external ordinances make that which is within; where conscience is, and the knowledge of good and evil, and a voice that speaks of love and purity; and is not the outward part of religion ordained by Him for the sake of regulating the inner man? Is not the soul as much His care as the body? “*But rather give alms of such things as ye have*”—or of your possessions, or as far as ye are able; “*and, behold, all things are clean unto you.*” By the Heathens, thanksgiving was expressed at their feasts by libations to the gods; by the Pharisees, religion was shown by external washings; by the Christian, in works of loving-kindness and mercy. The Apostle says of meats, “Every creature of God is good, —if received with thanksgiving.” Alms are thanksgiving

⁶ Aur. Cat.

in action. In other places it is the Word of God that cleanses; for of the same the Apostle adds, "For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." And our Lord Himself, "Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." But that Word was of love, and received into the heart. In other places, fasting is the sign of repentance; but as an external observance, avails not without this; as the Prophet had said to these Jews, "Is not the fast that I have chosen . . . to deal thy bread to the hungry?" But almsgiving is perhaps here mentioned as the reparation and cure of extortion just spoken of. It is thus that the publican, like Zaccheus, is more clean than the Pharisee; and becomes a true son of Abraham, which the other is declared not to be. And thus Nebuchadnezzar is counselled by Daniel to "break off his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor⁸." Not that giving alms can make clean without restitution, but the latter is evidently here included; nor does it simply mean giving to the poor, for some may give to the poor, yet live impenitent lives; such giving is not alms, for alms imply love as the motive; if I give all my goods to the poor without charity, it profiteth me nothing; love covereth the multitude of sins; and to love much is to be forgiven much.

It seems natural to suppose that the strong condemnation of the Pharisees which ensues was not spoken in the Pharisee's house, where our Lord was at meat; and it is followed continuously in the beginning of the next chapter with what was clearly not in the house: perhaps, therefore, we might suppose that the remark just given terminates the account in the house of the Pharisee; and, indeed, this Pharisee was at the time practising this better cleansing

⁷ Isa. lviii. 7.

⁸ Dan. iv. 27.

of almsgiving in receiving our Lord in his house,—and had, therefore, in his own case, some mitigation of the general remark respecting the hypocrisy of his class. Otherwise we must understand it, that this invitation was of itself insidious, and that this was a collection of Pharisees and Scribes, in order to try and take hold of Him: the invitation of the Pharisee on the former occasion was with a scrutinizing spirit of doubt. It is to be observed, that when the Lord is in the house of a Pharisee it is by invitation: to the Publicans He goes uninvited; and the invitations are with suspicion and distrust. St. Augustin speaks as if he took it all to be at the table of the Pharisee. “But how was it,” he says, “that He spared not the man by whom He was invited? Yea, rather, He spared him by reproof, that when corrected He might spare him in the judgment⁹.”

“*But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these,*” which appertain to the soul, “*ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other,*” which are the external fulfilment of the Law, “*undone.*” Where the same occurs in our Lord’s last teaching in the Temple, in St. Matthew, for “all manner of herbs,” we read “mint, anise, and cummin;” and “judgment, mercy, and faith,” are spoken of as the weightier matters of the Law. This is not said of the Pharisaical traditional washings, that they are to be done, or not left undone, but of the tithes, which are “a kind of almsgiving,” says St. Chrysostom¹. But if these tithes were the tenth portion of their goods given in alms to God, why is the giving of alms spoken of as what they had yet to do, that all things might be made clean to them? St. Augustin well says, “This was not

⁹ Serm. cvi. Par. ed.

¹ Hom. in Matt.

almsgiving, inasmuch as there was neither faith, love, nor mercy in it. It is as if He had said, 'I know your alms in tithes, but these are not the alms I require'.²' St. Cyril, indeed, supposes it was not giving, but exacting tithes. But taking it as the word is rendered in our own translation of St. Matthew, "Ye pay tithes;" yet to give such alms was, in fact, no greater self-sacrifice than these washings,—they both ministered to self-ostentation; and in the very giving of tithes there was covetousness; for by so doing they forced others to do the same: they are put expressly as distinct from judgment and the love of God. "Well," says a Latin writer, "are judgment and love combined; for judgment without love tends to cruelty, love without judgment to remissness; but judgment with love to equity".³

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets;" salutations of deference and respect to support their pride; to love such things is "esteemed among men," but "abomination in the sight of God." They are not condemned for having the uppermost seats, but for loving them; to have them may be a part of duty. "Woe, therefore," says the last-mentioned writer, "to those miserable men to whom the vices of the Pharisees have passed, who, through the short and uncertain race of this life, in which they ought to be humbly mourning over their sins, fear not to aspire after the first place, and to contend for it."

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them:" the same figure as in the Psalms,—*"Their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue."* To approach dead bodies was

² Serm. cvi.

³ Vita Christi, p. 318.

drawing near to legal pollution : when such were unseen, as covered with grass or otherwise, men approached such pollution without being aware of it. Or the figure may be the same as that in St. Matthew, spoken of sepulchres such as are outwardly ornamented, which "appear not" what they are within, viz. "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Such are unlike the true Church, which, together with her children, is "all glorious within;" which says of herself in the Canticles, "I am black, but comely;" as being unseemly without, yet within beautiful. St. Ambrose and St. Cyril both speak of these hidden graves as sepulchres outwardly adorned, which would give it the same meaning as that in St. Matthew.

"Then answered one of the interpreters of the Law, and said unto Him, Master, thus saying, Thou reproachest us also. And He said, Woe unto you also, ye interpreters of the Law! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." Whereas the good Shepherd goeth before the sheep, leads the way, and Himself carries the lambs in His bosom. "As often," says Theophylact, "as the teacher does what he teaches, he lightens the load, by offering himself for an example⁴." *"Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the Prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres⁵."* Ye build their sepulchres in hypocritical pretences to sanctity, as if doing honour to the Prophets; corresponding to the former expression, "Woe unto you! for ye wash the outside, while ye leave the inside unclean." Or it is possible that building the sepulchres of murdered persons might have been a prover-

⁴ Aur. Cat.

⁵ See The Holy Week, pp. 213. 224—231.

bial speech, signifying, "Ye set the crown to their evil deeds by your own, which keep them up, and set them forth in perpetual remembrance;" which are to be visited upon you in all their fulness. *"Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them Prophets and Apostles, and of them shall they slay and persecute: that the blood of all the Prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the Temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation⁶."*

"Woe unto you, interpreters of the Law! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered⁷." "The Law," says St. Cyril, "was itself the key of knowledge;" or, as he afterwards adds, "faith, the interpreter of the Law;" or "the humility of Christ," says St. Augustin. It is Christ that bears the key,—*"the key of David⁸,"*—"the key of the house of David,—upon His shoulder⁹." They had taken away that which belonged unto Christ. But what shall be to them to whom are entrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven, if they enter not in themselves, and hinder others?

"And as He said these things unto them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began vehemently to urge Him, and to provoke Him to speak of many things; laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him" (Luke). The expression translated "provoke Him to speak," implies so to question Him as to catch up His words; as in the many insidious questions of the tribute to Cæsar,—the woman taken in

⁶ See The Holy Week, pp. 232, 233. ⁷ See The Holy Week, p. 224.

⁸ Rev. iii. 7.

⁹ Isa. xxii. 22.

adultery,—of His authority, and, it may be added, of the widow of seven husbands. There is another reading, with a slight difference, which would signify to overwhelm His words with interruptions,—the same expression as is used by St. Paul, and translated, “whose mouths ought to be stopped¹.”

The similarity of most parts of this discourse with that of St. Matthew in the Temple is remarkable, and so are some of the variations. St. Augustin says, “Matthew says these things were spoken at Jerusalem; Luke, on the way thither: it appears to me that they were similar discourses, of which Matthew mentions one, Luke the other².” Maldonatus also thinks that the circumstances of this foregoing chapter took place in Judea; and that the narrative of the ensuing chapter is introduced by St. Luke by association of subject, but occurred at a different time and place,—the scene of the discourses being evidently in Galilee; and that they were spoken to the disciples in hearing of the multitude. The whole of these circumstances have been placed in this Harmony as if they had taken place in Galilee, but with the doubts expressed respecting the time and place of these latter discourses. Perhaps the supposition of its being in Judea, arises partly from the Pharisees being so much addressed; but St. Mark previously, in the parallel, had spoken of them as “the Scribes who came down from Jerusalem.”

¹ ἐπιστομίζειν, Tit. i. 11, here ἀποστοματίζειν.

² De Consens. Evang. ii. 144.

SECTION VI

DISCIPLES WARNED AGAINST HYPOCRISY

ST. MATTHEW, after mentioning the coming of our Lord's Mother and brethren, adds, that "on the same day" He delivered His parables by the sea-shore; the last-mentioned circumstance, therefore, of His going to eat bread at the house of the Pharisee, which St. Luke relates, must have intervened before His going to the sea-side; and if the following passages in St. Luke occupy their place in the order of events, they must have been spoken between the house of the Pharisee and the sea-shore; but there is nothing in the narrative that marks the time, excepting the fact of its being introduced after the conversation in the Pharisee's house, for there is no allusion to time or circumstance in the matters spoken of. There appears some little difficulty in the discourse itself, inasmuch as it is addressed apparently to the disciples, to caution them against the Pharisees and against the world; and yet it seems to be delivered in the presence of vast multitudes, and probably among those very persons against whom they are warned. But there is in this nothing unlikely or unsuitable; indeed, the very same appears to have been the case in the last denunciations against the Pharisees in the Temple; for it is there said, "Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, Beware of the Scribes³;" and in the same discourse He addresses them as present. But there is a still more remarkable counterpart to this occasion; for

³ Luke xx. 45

here it would seem, from the ensuing words of St. Luke, as if the previous discourse had been addressed to the Pharisees themselves, perhaps in that house of the Pharisee, and that our Lord now proceeds with the same subject, not in warning to them, but in caution to others. Something very similar occurs at the beginning of the next year; for there we find warnings of a like import addressed to the Pharisees on their finding fault with the disciples for eating with unwashed hands; and immediately after "He called," it is said, "all the people unto Him ⁴," and addressed to them warnings of the same kind with respect to the Pharisees and their hypocrisies. The train of circumstances is very like what follows.

"In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven⁵ of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke). The same expression of "leaven" applied to doctrine, occurs on a different occasion, when the disciples mistake it for the literal sense, as if referring to bread, which they had forgotten to take in the boat. Our Lord does not explain it on that occasion, but reproves them for not understanding it: and St. Matthew adds that it was spoken of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. *"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in secret chambers, shall be proclaimed upon the houses."* A parallel to these and the following verses is found in St. Matthew ⁶, but so

⁴ Mark vii. 14.

⁵ See Study of Gospels, Part iv. § v. pp. 257, 258.

⁶ Matt. x. 26.

introduced as to have a different meaning: for here it seems to allude to secret sins which shall be revealed in the light, but there it speaks of the doctrines they hear from Christ in secret, which they are exhorted to preach publicly; and, indeed, the former verse occurs in St. Mark in another place with a meaning similar to that in St. Matthew, where it is attached to the mention of the Church, which is to be a "candle set on a candlestick," and "not under a bushel." St. Hilary, St. Jerome, and some others, take this publication to be at the Judgment, which will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness." Others, as St. Chrysostom, interpret it of a manifestation in this world. But from what has been said, it will appear that it is used in a different sense in the two cases: in the one place, it is the manifestation of the Gospel to the world; in the other, which is this of St. Luke, it is the manifestation of the Judgment, and of that which, in anticipation of it, even now takes place; for the Pharisees and Apostles are both already manifested in their true characters. In either case, all things are made manifest by the Light, and that Light is Christ.

Both in St. Luke and in St. Matthew, the passage is followed by the same exhortation, not to fear man, but God. And here the connexion is obvious; for the words against the Pharisees were enough to fill the disciples and multitudes with terror, as they feared to oppose them. Our Lord, therefore, connects with it these declarations, as showing how little they were truly objects of alarm. "*But I say unto you, My friends,*"—ye that are truly Mine with a stability that no earthly friendship can have,—"*be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will*

forewarn you whom ye shall fear : fear Him, Which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell : yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" If even the sparrows, which God hath made for the use of man, depend not on the power of man, but on the will of God, how much more do ye, whom God hath made for His own glory? For of them the value is so small; but ye are bought by the precious blood of the Son of God, and are made in the Divine image. *"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."* It was just said, with great emphasis, "Fear Him; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him;" but now it is added, "Fear not," on account of your exceeding value in the eyes of your heavenly Father. Fear, therefore, Him with a confiding, loving fear; and fear Him so much, that ye may fear nothing else. And thus again it is added, "Fear not, little flock;" for, as St. John says, "Perfect love casteth out fear;" and St. Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution?" and St. Peter, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror." Every evil, therefore, that flesh is heir to, may be incurred; but yet, they are no objects of fear; for love casteth out fear of temporal evils from the all-transcending fear of God: "Yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." "The fear of the Lord," says Solomon, "tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil⁸." Carnal evils and death God hath in nature made man to fear, in order that he may be taught

⁸ Prov. xix. 23.

thereby to fear spiritual evils and death: and herein is he, by grace, taught to forget all other fear. All that philosophers have said of courage, is contained in these words, which encourage us not to fear them that kill the body. For this wonderful Fatherly providence, without which not a sparrow falleth to the ground, is not introduced as a reason why they should not die, but why they should not fear death. In like manner, when in the storm they were afraid, the disciples were reprov'd as "of little faith," while Christ was with them, not because they were not in peril, but because they ought to have committed unto Him the keeping of their souls, as unto a faithful Creator. As St. Jerome says, "if these little creatures . . . if things made to perish, perish not without God's will, you, who are eternal, ought not to fear that you live without His Providence. The sense is the same as is before expressed, Behold the fowls of the air¹." But one implies that they live not without Him; this that their deaths also are in His Providence. We are to cast off all fear of death, as a sparrow falls not to the ground, nor a leaf from a tree, without Him; and from being assured of the greater value of our souls. Men will give up their temporal goods to God's honour, under the consideration that they cannot keep them; so also ought they their temporal life, of which the very days and hours are numbered and known to God. "It is an unworthy task," says St. Hilary, "to number things that are to perish; therefore, that we may know that nothing of us should perish, we are told that our very hairs are numbered. No accident, then, that can befall our bodies, is to be feared²." Our hairs being numbered, of course implies (as St. Ambrose and St. Cyril explain it), exact

¹ In Matt. x. 29.

² Comm. in Matt. x. 20.

knowledge, and the most minute consideration, of all things belonging to every man, and affectionate care of him. The expression, in itself so beautiful, conveys its own meaning better than any explanation can do. St. Jerome, indeed, observes, that we do not always keep what we number, and, therefore, it does not imply the exact restoration of every particle of the body in the resurrection. But still we number things that we value, and the numbering of our hairs may be considered secretly to contain the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. But the first and obvious sense is but the expression of a particular providence. Nothing can be too trifling to make a subject of prayer; nothing can be beneath the consideration of God.

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.” St. Chrysostom notices that it is “confess in Me,” literally, as if by Christ’s grace and strength, and not our own. It implies free profession of the truth,—for the truth may be betrayed by suppression,—and fearless confession, not in word only, but also in the daily life and actions; for there is a denying the faith and a denying Christ by works. “In works they deny Him,” says the Apostle; and of another’s ill deeds, “He hath denied the faith³.” And as many ways as there are of denying Christ, so many must there be of confessing Him. Christ will confess them, when He says, “Come, ye blessed of My Father;” He will deny them, when He says, “I know you not.” He indeed confessed His faithful disciples now, and denied the Pharisees, “before men,” but not

³ Tit. i. 16. 1 Tim. v. 8.

“before the angels;” this will be at the last judgment, which is in the presence of the angels. If angels rejoice over a returning penitent, how much must they be concerned for those whom Christ confesses before them. We feel being acknowledged or denied in the presence of those who are interested for us.

The whole of this passage is much the same as it occurs in St. Matthew on sending out the Twelve; but the following verse we have lately seen in St. Matthew on another occasion⁴. “*And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.*”

The following, again, is more connected with the mission of the Apostles, but addressed to all Christians as sent forth into the world, “as lambs among wolves.” It seems addressed to the Twelve in St. Matthew; spoken to all Christians in St. Mark, in warnings of the end of the world⁵. “*And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say*” (Luke). In all things we are to be without carefulness,—for the body, because God numbers the very hairs of our head; for the mind, and the part that behoves us to act in difficulties, because the Holy Ghost shall teach us at the very hour, and strength will be given according to our need.

⁴ See pp. 151—153.

⁵ Matt. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11.

SECTION VII

THE RICH MAN DYING SUDDENLY

“*And a certain one said unto Him out of the crowd, Master, speak to my brother to divide with me the inheritance. And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or divider over you?*” (Luke). On the expression “man,” with which our Lord addresses him, Bede quotes St. Paul’s saying, “Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” But the same term in St. Luke is addressed to the paralytic, with, surely, no such meaning⁶. The reply is similar in its terms to that spoken to Moses, when he would have reconciled two Hebrew brethren that were contending, when one of them said unto him, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us⁷?” For there Moses was, by anticipation, assuming his office, as the lawgiver of a temporal kingdom; but this Christ disclaims, because His kingdom was not of this world. In a far higher and better sense was it to be fulfilled in the Messiah, that “He shall judge the people according unto right, and defend the poor.” He is supreme Lawgiver, but not of houses and lands; for, as St. Paul says, “If ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge which are least esteemed in the Church.” If “a good soldier of Christ Jesus” is not to “entangle himself with the affairs of this life,” much less does it behove the “Captain of our salvation.” “Well,” says St. Ambrose, “doth He decline earthly things, Who had descended on

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 3. Luke v. 20.

⁷ Exod. ii. 14.

account of things Divine; nor doth He deign to be the judge of disputes, and disposer of possessions, as having the judgment of the quick and dead, and the disposal of their merits." "Not undeservedly, therefore, is he refused who was desirous to occupy the dispenser of things heavenly with things corruptible; when between brothers no judge should intervene, but natural piety should divide the patrimony; and the patrimony that men ought to covet, is that of immortality⁸." St. Augustin, in like manner,—“He sought for half the inheritance; he sought for half on earth, the Lord offered him the whole in heaven. The Lord gave more than he had asked⁹.”

Interfering not, therefore, in their worldly disputes, He looked, as the Physician of the soul, to the cause of these dissensions in the heart of both, seizing the occasion, as His manner was, to instruct the crowd in things heavenly. “*And He said unto them, See and take heed of covetousness;*” or “all covetousness,” as St. Augustin, Cyril, and some others, seem to have read it. It requires heed, as it is a certain deceivableness which is attributed to riches. “They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare.” “*For it is not in the abundance of any one's possessions that his life consists.*” But lest this declaration should pass away, that which follows will adhere to the memory and conscience:—

“*And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he reasoned in himself*”— he spake within himself, for secret and untold are the anxieties of the rich—“*saying, What shall I do*”— as one in perplexity and care—“*for I have not where to collect my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and will build greater,*

⁸ Expos. in Luc. vii. 122.

⁹ Serm. cvii. 2. Par. ed.

and I will collect there all my fruits and my goods ; and I will say unto my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, O void of understanding, on this night thy soul they are demanding of thee ; and the things which thou hast provided, for whom shall they be ? Thus is he who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God” (Luke). There is an awful and sublime simplicity in this parable, which arises much from its mysterious elliptical character : from the details it omits, its awfulness and comprehensiveness is greatly increased. It is not said that the man’s riches increased from his own carefulness or extortion, but by the blessing of God “his land brought forth abundantly.” He did, or rather intended to do, what was apparently but needful under such circumstances, enlarging his means of store and phylacteries ; nor is it stated that it excited further covetousness, but produced the natural feeling of self-congratulation and ease ; nor is it said that he is taken to a place of punishment ; nor is it mentioned that his riches pass to the hands of a stranger. Nothing more is said than what the Roman poet describes, “*Cedes coemptis saltibus.*” Awful and expressive is the silence ; like that mysterious obscurity which hangs over our very being, of which we are given to know that it is infinite in value, and little more. It is but a description of one who says to himself, “I am rich and increased in goods ; and knows not that he is poor and naked.” Our Lord’s words describe this contrast. He was wise in this world, reasoning prudently ; therefore he is called “void of understanding.” He thought of “many years,” but had not another day to see ; he spoke of “much goods,” but had nothing to keep as his own. “They spend their days,”

says Job, "in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave¹." And the Psalmist, "These prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession;" but when weighed in the sanctuary of God, "O how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end!" This sudden judgment, in the midst of successful avarice, was the case with Judas, who was probably now listening to this parable. He is "void of understanding," for he promises himself many years to come, while he knew not what should be on the morrow. "He saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods; and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave those things to others, and die²." "God said unto him, This night;" either by a supernatural visitation, as God spake to Belshazzar, or by some indication of approaching death; or, as the rich man is represented as speaking to his own soul, so God speaks to him, not in word, but in purpose and intent, coming, as in all His visitations, "as a thief in the night." "They require thy soul," it is said; but it is not mentioned who require it; but where the body falls, the eagles are gathered; so are the spirits at hand to take the departing soul to its destination. "Certain dread powers," says St. Chrysostom, "which bring the unwilling soul before the Judge." It is like that expression on the death of the good, "When ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." "I say not where," as St. Augustin explains it, "but will or nill thy soul must go³."

How common a case is this! He that is good to the unthankful and the evil had filled his stores; but he thought not of repaying his Benefactor by charity. There is a kind of ownership and strong feeling of property, as

¹ Job xxi. 13.

² Eccclus. xi. 19.

³ Serm. cvii.

Theophylact observes, in his very mode of speaking of "my fruits," and "my goods." For the ample return which should have been given in alms, he sought larger barns; "barns large enough," says St. Basil, "might have been the bellies of the poor;" and surely, far more safe, for such are the storehouses of God. The poor of Christ are heavenly barns, and whoso giveth unto the poor, lendeth unto the Lord. O blessed covetousness, to be rich towards God! to be rich in hopes laid up in heaven, for alms, which God has promised to reserve in His own treasure-house, and to restore again! The expression is expanded by St. Paul, "Charge them that are rich in this world, not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God . . . that they be rich in good works . . . laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come⁴." Those things are not ours, says St. Ambrose, which we cannot carry away with us. The only companion of the dead is virtue; mercy alone followeth us, which leadeth the way to heavenly mansions, and by the use of worthless money, acquireth for the dead eternal habitations⁵. The more any one rejoices, says St. Gregory, in the possession of temporal goods, by so much the less does he grieve for the loss of those that are eternal.

SECTION VIII

DISCIPLES EXHORTED TO HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS

THE foregoing parable appears to have been addressed

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 17. 19.

⁵ Expos. in Luc. vii. 122.

to the multitude after taking occasion from the dispute of the brothers; and now the discourse in its encouraging tone turns to the disciples, affectionately leading them on, as our Lord's manner was, from the danger of covetousness to Evangelical perfection. The words, indeed, are much the same as those introduced by St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount⁶; as the parallel to the latter part of this discourse is found in the warnings respecting the last day, on the Mount of Olives. "*And He said unto His disciples, Wherefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye may eat; nor for the body, what ye may put on. The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment*" (Luke). He gave life, and will sustain it—it is the Breath of God: there is something in that life more precious than any thing which mere bodily subsistence can support; and yet even of these bodily needs He is careful. The course of nature around is constituted to teach this lesson. "*Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; to whom there is neither storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much are ye better than the birds?*" "He feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him," says the Psalmist; making mention especially of the ravens as dependent, Eusebius observes, not on the fruits of the earth, but on flesh, which is uncertain. "God feedeth them," such is their high privilege; and to this most nearly approaches the case of those who have least of their own; thus is it with little children, and of such is the kingdom of heaven; God feedeth them with no care or forethought of their own. And next to these is it the case with the poor. On the fifth day of the week we take our lesson

⁶ See *The Nativity*, pp. 472—476.

from the birds; and on the same from Christ, the true Bread that came down from heaven, ascending thither. The Old Testament sends us to the bee and the ant beneath our feet, to make us wise in temporal wisdom from their characteristic instincts; the Gospel points to the birds above our heads to make us wise in things heavenly. And from this reference to the birds, St. Ambrose well argues that covetousness is in fact the cause of our poverty. For the fowls of the air know neither the one nor the other, "having nothing," "possessing all things;" claiming nothing as their own, they have abundance from God. He Who "giveth richly all things to enjoy," dispenses more abundantly according to the more abundant trust in Him.

And of how little avail is human solicitude? "*And which of you by anxious carefulness can add unto his stature one cubit? If therefore ye cannot do that which is least, why for the rest are ye full of care?*" The expression of not being able to add one cubit to the stature, is like that in the Sermon on the Mount, "Ye cannot make one hair white or black." And if the fowls of the air reprove man for his anxieties for bodily sustenance, so do the flowers his anxieties for raiment. "*Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*" Man is doomed to toil and spin, yet not so as to distrust that Fatherly Providence of which he sees indications around. The exquisite beauty of wild flowers seems to refer to the carefulness of men not merely for sufficient clothing, but for more refined modes of dress, which, after all, cannot equal the spontaneous productions of the uncultivated earth. The lily had already been consecrated to a more

excellent mystery, where it is said of Christ Himself, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys⁷."

"If God so clothe the grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven:"—it is not, as so often in Scripture, that which is green in the morning, but in the evening is "cut down, dried up, and withered," but which, even at last, has no value but for so vile a purpose—"to be cast into the oven;" "*how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?*" If God hath so great care of flowers, which are only born that they may be seen and perish; how much greater must be His care of men, who are called to eternal things? St. Paul says; "having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." But this precept is still more Divine and heavenly,—even for these be not solicitous, but leave it to God. For this end He has afforded in these things supernatural proofs of His care, as in the Israelites; "I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy feet: ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine⁸." And in the Apostles; "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing." Showing that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. As set forth also in Moses and Elijah, when supported without food for forty days. To suffer hunger, and to rejoice therein, is better than to be full of bread: and in dying, to know that death is more desirable than life, is better than to live. And this seems to be contained in the expression, "is not life more than meat?" as implying that meat, indeed, may be withheld, but still the true and better life is, notwithstanding, taken care of by God, as the object of great

⁷ Cant. ii. 1.

⁸ Deut. xxix. 5.

value in His sight. “*And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind;*” as one that is in suspense between God and mammon, of whom St. James says; “*Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*” “*For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*” He knoweth in parental love. “*The Heavenly Physician,*” says St. Augustin, “*knoweth what He will give to console—what He will subtract to exercise us; for man subtracteth not provision from his beast without cause. If therefore He knoweth, as it is said; and willeth as a Father, and is able as Almighty, it cannot then be feared but that He will provide for us.*”

“*But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.*” The heart must be set on something, and if on that which is Divine and infinite, every thing else will follow in its place, and be ennobled and sanctified. Origen mentions it, on two occasions, as a saying of our Lord, “*Seek great things, and small things shall be added unto you: seek heavenly things, and earthly things shall be supplied*.” It may be a paraphrase of what is here intended, but probably it was another saying. Many declarations are there in Scripture to the same effect. “*They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.*” “*All things work together for good to them that love God*.” “*They that fear Him lack nothing.*” And thus, in the Lord’s Prayer, we first of all pray for the coming of His kingdom, and afterwards for our daily bread. Let the kingdom of God be first sought, and then means taken for the necessaries of life will be without care and blessed in resignation.

⁹ πρὸ ἐὶς ἄλλῃς, and Select. in Psal.

¹ Rom. viii. 28.

“Fear not, little flock :”—the term “little,” Theophylact considers as used with respect to the multitude of angels, or to the greater number of the reprobate, or to the humility of Christians ; or as including these three senses, as little in nature, in number, in renown. It seems to be more especially spoken in the latter sense, as an affectionate expression with respect to the lowliness of God’s children, as it comes in an exhortation to this poorness of spirit. Beautifully may the expression be applied at all times to the remnant of Christ’s little ones in an evil world. *“Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom :”* and if God has prepared His kingdom for you, how little need ye care for these things. “In that day,” says the Prophet, “it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will rest in His love².” *“Sell your possessions, and give alms ; provide yourselves bags that grow not old, a treasure that faileth not, in the heavens : where thief approacheth not, nor moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there also your heart will be.”* “Love,” says St. Augustin, “is the weight of the soul, carrying it whithersoever itself is borne ; and the soul is more truly there where it loves than where it breathes.” And Fulgentius : “That we therefore may have treasure in heaven, let us love things heavenly. Wouldst thou know where thy treasure is ? attend to what thou lovest : wouldst thou know what thou lovest ? attend to what thy thoughts are wont to turn. So shall it be that thou shalt know thy treasure from thy love, and thou shalt know thy love from the proof thy thoughts will give thee³.”

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burn-

² Zeph. iii. 16, 17.

³ From Vita Christi, p. 167.

ing; and ye yourselves like unto men that are expecting their Master, when He shall return from the wedding: that when He cometh and knocketh, they may immediately open unto Him." The figure has evidently a reference to the parable of the Ten Virgins; but as it seems to have been spoken previously to the delivery of that parable, it may probably be connected with some other description of our Lord's: and indeed the figure is not altogether the same as that of the parable, for here they are men waiting with lamps, not virgins; and they have to open the door for their lord, and not to wait without, as in that parable; they are expecting, not the Bridegroom, perhaps, but a Master returning late from the marriage-feast. The allusion to the marriage custom referred to a familiar circumstance; and the mystical image of marriage abounds in the Scriptures from the second chapter of Genesis to the last in the Revelation. It is "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." The loins girded and lamps burning, is beautifully supposed by Theophylact to be expressive of the active and contemplative life; both of these must be combined, both in a state of watchfulness, in the attitude, as it were, of looking out and expectation. For neither of these avail without the other. The loins girded is also taken by many of the Fathers for abstaining from the works of the flesh, and the lights burning for the flame of charity; or loins are girded for active diligence in our heavenly calling, when the flame of devotion by reflection is kept burning. "Stand therefore," says St. Paul, "having your loins girt about:" and St. Peter, "wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end⁴." All is watchful expectation in the night. The Master's having gone to a wedding and then returning, is taken by

⁴ Eph. vi. 14. 1 Pet. i. 13.

Theophylact, Gregory, and others, to be our Lord's going to heaven and His return thence at the end of the world; "He shall come," says the former, "from heaven in the glory of the Father; perhaps, also, every hour standing suddenly present at the death of each individual." "There are four Advents of Christ to men," says Innocentius, "two of them visible, and two invisible. His first visible Advent was in the flesh, when He came in weakness of the body: the other visible Advent will be in the majesty of God, when He comes to judgment. The first invisible Advent is in the heart of the just man through grace: the second His invisible Advent at death to each faithful servant. These four Advents the Church represents in the Advent Sundays; not only in the number of the days, but also in the character of the offices." St. Gregory applies the knocking to the warnings of sickness and death. "He knocks," says Dionysius, "at the door of our hearts in many ways, that if not for one, yet for another we may open to Him. He knocks by the words of teachers, by examples of the good, by benefits conferred, by stripes inflicted, by promises of rewards, by threats of torments, by His own sufferings, and by those of His saints; but there are some who are unwilling to answer to the Lord when He knocketh⁵."

"Blessed are those servants whom, when He shall have come, the Lord shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself;"—as a servant about to attend on his lord, as He describes a master saying to a slave, "Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me⁶;" *"and shall make them to recline at the table, and will come forward, and minister unto them."* Shall make them to recline, or sit down at meat,

⁵ Vita Christi, pp. 527—529.

⁶ Luke xvii. 8.

as brought by Him to a place of everlasting rest and peace; sitting, as He elsewhere says, at His table in His kingdom. He shall gird Himself and serve them, as alluding to our exaltation by His humiliations, that by His poverty we are made rich. "*And if He shall come in the second watch, and if He shall have come in the third watch, and shall have found them so, blessed are those servants.*" The similar passage in St. Mark has it, "At evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning," where the parallel in St. Matthew expresses it generally, as "at what watch the thief would come". He that has not watched in the first watch, or morning of his life, may still be blessed if he watches in the second; and he that has omitted to do so in the second, yet still in the third he may watch and be blessed. "So great," says St. Gregory, "is the long-suffering of God: but according to His forbearance, so in the end will be His judgment; and he that neglects the one, may at any moment be overtaken by the other."

But this uncertainty, intended to make men at all times watchful, will become a temptation, as it is added: "*But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief cometh, he would have watched, and would not have left his house to be broken through. And be ye therefore ready: for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh*" (Luke); not shall come, but cometh, as already at hand; "for the hour cometh, and now is, when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man⁸." When the soul is released from the body, and shall have come to the mind of God, then only can it know what is here said,—that it will be short, but will appear long,

⁷ See The Holy Week, p. 315. ⁸ See The Holy Week, pp. 318—325.

and yet be sudden ; and then it will understand that if it had known the hour, it would have watched.

SECTION IX

THE CHURCH EXHORTED TO WATCH

“Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, to us speakest Thou this parable, or even unto all?” (Luke). As our Lord had been speaking of the necessity of persons being ready for His coming, it seemed to have been addressed to all ; but as it appears from a comparison with St. Matthew and St. Mark that He had spoken of having given authority to His servants on His departure, St. Peter naturally inquires how far the subject was addressed to them, the Apostles ; and our Lord’s reply intimates, that although it was partly addressed in a peculiar sense to them, yet it was applicable both to them and others ; but to each with a difference, as of more or less talents entrusted. And in St. Mark it is followed by the declaration, “And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.” Here in St. Luke there appears this additional reason for the inquiry, as shortly before the words are introduced, “And He spake unto His disciples ;” and afterwards, “And He spake unto the multitude⁹ :” which seems to indicate that both His disciples and the multitude were with Him, and sometimes one of them more especially addressed. *“And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom the Lord shall set over His household to give them in season the due measure of corn?”* A steward must be both faithful and wise ; for if he were faithful and not

⁹ Luke xii. 22. 54.

wise, by injudicious conduct, he would injure the cause of his master; but if he were wise and not faithful, he would betray it, being wise for himself and the world, like that dishonest steward in the parable. The question is asked by our Lord, as implying, says St. Chrysostom, how rare and difficult it is to find such a one; and, we may add, the greatness of such when found. The expression, "Whom the Lord shall set over His household," intimates that the appointment is by Christ, and not by the intrusion of man into an office so sacred. "In season," implies dispensing according to the needs and capacities of the flock. "*Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find doing so. Truly I say unto you, that over all His possessions He will set him*¹. *But and if that servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth to come; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and the maid-servants, and to eat and drink, and be drunken. The Lord of that servant will have come in a day in which he expecteth him not, and in an hour which he knoweth not, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint his portion with the unbelievers.*" The latter expression, of having "his portion with unbelievers," is not unlike that of St. Paul's, "He hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," which is spoken of one that doth "not provide for those of his own house,"—the character here described, except that one is of things temporal, the other of things spiritual. Probably both expressions have a latent allusion to some Jewish law or custom.

"But that servant that knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, nor did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and

¹ See The Holy Week, p. 346.

did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." There is an allusion of course to the Levitical Law, where, as if by anticipation of the moral and eternal retribution, there was this distinction made between sins of presumption and sins of ignorance². The figurative expression is also from the Law where the number of stripes is to be proportioned to the nature of the fault³. The term as here used has no reference to the duration of punishment, as St. Basil observes, but to the degrees of suffering. "*For to whomsoever much hath been given, much shall be of him required; and to whom they have entrusted much, the more will they demand of him.*" All this appears to be a reply to the question of St. Peter, implying that the warnings were directed so as to have an especial reference to Apostles and Ministers, and such as knew their Lord's will; but also to the multitudes generally, and, perhaps, even to heathens as well as Christians; with this rule to regulate the retributions, that according to knowledge or ignorance will be the aggravation or mitigation. This is brought out again more fully in the parables of the talents or pounds: as "the elders that rule well" are to be "counted worthy of double honour," so likewise of greater punishment if unfaithful.

"*I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?*" or, what can I desire so much as that it were already kindled? The Latin version is, "And what do I wish, but that it were kindled?" or, as St. Jerome has it, "How do I wish that it might be kindled?" As expressive of an ardent wish; "If it were," or "Oh! that it were;" as the particle "if" in the Greek sometimes expresses the optative. "*But,*" before this fire

² Numb. xv. 29, 30.

³ Deut. xxv. 2.

can go forth, "*I have a baptism to be baptized with;*" I have to be plunged in the dark waterfloods of affliction and death; "*and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?*" "Am I straitened," or in agony, as the Latin is; in bearing our woes, says St. Ambrose, and longing for our redemption. For with the Holy Ghost and with fire must the Church be baptized, and Christ Himself, as a living sacrifice must first be offered for the same. Fire and water are here put together, and both in the same kind of sense, as the fire of persecution and the baptism of suffering: "We went through fire and water, and Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." To meet suffering, Christ always seems as it were to hasten, "setting His face steadfastly" towards it, and saying to the bringer of it, "What thou doest, do quickly;" as longing for our release through His own suffering, and for the glory of God through His humiliation. As if it were, I am come to send forth persecution and division upon earth, but have first Myself a baptism to undergo; but yet this fire I deprecate not, but earnestly desire that it may go forth, the fiery trial from which the children of God are to come forth as gold purified seven times in the fire; for if all who would live godly must suffer persecution, how, beyond all things, is that suffering and persecution desirable? The fire may be also taken for the Word of God, which goeth about unto the end of the world, till nothing is hid from the heat thereof; and for the Holy Spirit, in which sense it is generally explained by the Fathers, both Greek and Latin⁴. St. Ambrose, with great beauty, says, "A divine fire, which kindled flames in the bones of the prophets; as Jeremiah says, 'His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones'⁵." The fire of the

⁴ See Maldonat. in loco.

⁵ Jer. xx. 9.

Lord which it is said shall go before Him. A fire which kindles the lamps of those that watch 'with loins girded and lamps burning.' A lantern very needful in this life which is called night. The fire which Amaon and Cleopas testify as sent forth from the Lord, 'did not our hearts burn within us by the way⁶?'

"*Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.*" The expression is at first sight a startling one, for His kingdom is peace: peace was His last legacy to the world, and He hath made peace with the blood of His cross; add to which, that His religion requires meek submission in taking wrong. How, then, can it be the cause of division? But the peace which is to be the great characteristic of the Messiah's kingdom, is to be mostly realized in the midst of external troubles; and those troubles arising not only from the more distant dissensions of parties and states, but in that which reaches to the heart in those of families and households; so that the Prophet's description of worldly dissension is to be fulfilled in the Christian kingdom. "The daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: a man's enemies are the men of his own house⁷." "*For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. A father shall be divided against a son, and a son against a father; a mother against a daughter, and a daughter against a mother; a mother-in-law against a daughter-in-law, and a daughter-in-law against a mother-in-law.*" Perhaps on this account it may be that of Elias it is said, "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers⁸;" as implying, that those persecutions and divisions which are

⁶ Expos. in Luc. vii. 132.

⁷ Micah vii. 6.

⁸ Mal. iv. 6.

to precede the Lord's coming will be healed by Elias, who will restore peace. That divisions should be occasioned by the Gospel, arises from man's sins and imperfections; as in the heart of every man there are divisions and wars before all is subjugated to the spirit; the appetites rebel against conscience, reason against faith, the senses against the spirit, the animal part of man against the rational, the intellectual against the divine; all is war till Christ fully enters declaring peace; nor is that peace entirely established till self is lost in God. Perhaps, therefore, these divisions and evils in the world are not to be deprecated, but, with Christ, to be earnestly longed for, that grace may the more abound,—for such are but the more violent writhings of the evil spirit before he is cast out. The fire of Christ's Presence will consume, says St. Ambrose, the hay and the stubble, but make better the vessels of the Lord's house.

“And He said also unto the multitudes,” in distinction from the disciples, to whom it is stated that the former words were spoken, *“When ye behold the cloud rising from the west, straightway ye say, A shower cometh: and so it is. And when ye perceive the south wind blowing, ye say that it will be heat; and it comes to pass. Hypocrites, the face of the earth and of the heaven ye know how to discern;”* or to ascertain by putting it to the test and proof, as the word here used implies. *“But this time how is it ye discern not? And why even of your own selves do ye not judge what is right?”* When there is an interest awakened in religion, it will supply itself with knowledge, and thus, even of ourselves, will there be a discernment of right⁹. To judge of spiritual matters differently to what men do of their temporal interests is hypocrisy, a deceit-

⁹ Study of Gospels, pp. 131, 132. See The Holy Week, p. 304.

fulness of heart. Knowledge is derived from observation, which in morals a good life supplies; thus good men discerned Christ on His first coming, thus will the children of light His second approach, and lift up their eyes as their redemption draws nigh. In comparing this passage with a similar one in St. Matthew, it may be seen as an instance of our Lord's using the same modes of speech at different times. For on that occasion, the Pharisees, on asking for a sign, are told, that their being able to descry prognostications of the weather, and yet not to see the signs of the times, was a proof of their hypocrisy. But the circumstances of their introduction are different, and so is the figure; for there the redness of the morning or evening sky is spoken of; but here the cloud and the wind, as indications of a shower or heat. If we admit the mystical interpretation of St. Augustin and St. Chrysostom, that the fair or the stormy morning represent the first and second Advents of Christ, here, in the same mode of application, we might say, Ye see the cloud coming from the west, the Gentiles awakened by Christ's coming, and hastening to Him, but your hard hearts are not softened to repentance: the south wind blows on the garden of the Lord, but the spices thereof flow not out¹.

“For as thou goest with thine adversary,” or opponent-at-law, *“to a ruler, in the way give diligence to be released from him,”* in St. Matthew it is *“agree quickly;”* *“lest he drag thee,”* struggling against him as one reluctant, an elegant expressive term, says Origen; *lest he drag thee “to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I say unto thee, thou shalt not depart thence, until thou payest the last mite”*

¹ Cant. iv. 16.

(Luke); which signifies, says Bede, everlasting punishment, and that there will be no escape from thence. "Our adversary," says St. Ambrose, "is the devil, or any vicious practice, or an evil conscience: and the Judge He to whom all judgment is committed." Although this passage is so similar to that in St. Matthew, yet the immediate application with which it is introduced differs²; in the Sermon on the Mount it is on the subject of forgiveness of injuries, and being without delay reconciled to an offending brother, as if saying, Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath, lest the night of death overtake thee; but here it is inserted in speaking of the coming of the last Day, and rather abruptly introduced by the Evangelist. That which appeared in the former to be an erring brother, is here found to be the great Accuser. Though appearing abrupt in its introduction, yet it has a peculiar force with reference to the foregoing, as if to say, In temporal things you look wisely and provide for your interests, lest ruin overtake you; why do ye not act with the same forethought with regard to things eternal?

SECTION X

THE GALILEANS SLAIN BY PILATE

WE have often had occasion to observe how our Lord introduces His divine instruction in connexion with passing occurrences; we have now a fresh instance of the same kind, yet different in itself from any other. "*There were present at that time some who brought Him tidings concerning the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their*

² See The Nativity, p. 452.

sacrifices." Galilee was the place the chief priests spoke of afterwards to Pilate, when they wished him to believe that Christ was a leader of insurrection, and the mention of it arrested his particular attention ; from which it is evident that the Galileans had afforded a Roman governor apprehension from their seditions. St. Cyril says that this was the insurrection under Judas of Galilee, spoken of by Gamaliel, in the Acts ; that one thing he taught was against sacrifices being offered up not prescribed by the Mosaic Law, or for the safety of the Roman empire. An account which he seems to derive from Josephus, who speaks of him as Judas Gaulonites, and denying all submission to the Roman or any earthly sovereign. It is further said, that this interference of Pilate in slaying these Galileans was the cause of his quarrel with Herod, who resented his interference, until a reconciliation took place by his sending Christ to him as one of his own jurisdiction. Whatever may have been the circumstances, the feelings of the Jews were much shocked, as the attack of the Romans was made upon them in the midst of religious services, and considered in the light of a signal judgment. *"And Jesus answering said unto them, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? Nay, I say unto you; But unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* It is not said that this was not a judgment on these Galileans, nor that it is wrong to notice the sins that occasion such a judgment, for often such are manifest. The thing reprov'd is the inference that those who were thus visited were more sinful than others,—*"beyond all the Galileans,"* or *"beyond all men dwelling in Jerusalem."* For if suffering be a sign of God's love, it follows that they who suffer are not to be esteemed worse than those who suffer not. Therefore such

sufferings should not be to those that witness them a subject of self-congratulation, but of warning. For lighter sins are often punished in this world, while more grievous are left for heavier punishment hereafter. Such punishments are intended as warnings to amend the heirs of eternal life in those that give heed to them ; while, to those who do not, they aggravate condemnation. The lesson, therefore, is, that we notice such judgments as warnings, and take heed to ourselves. Such judgments, moreover, often characterize heavier visitations which are to ensue ; all nations therefore have noticed them as omens, and expect to find in them such resemblances. “ *Or those eighteen on whom there fell the tower in Siloam, and slew them, think ye that they were debtors beyond all the dwellers in Jerusalem ? Nay, I say unto you ; But unless ye repent, ye all in like manner shall perish.*” Probably both were incidents fresh in the minds of all at the time, together with the uncharitable inferences drawn from them. But the introduction of the two together, the connexion thereby of Galilee with Jerusalem—the Roman slaughter in the one case, and the fall of a tower in that city in the other, these, when put together, contain striking intimations of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the common judgment awaiting that nation. When our Lord uses the words “likewise” and “in like manner,” there is a Divine fulness and significancy in the words ; which will appear more as the resemblance is traced in the two events. The blood of these Galileans was united with their sacrifices ; so, in the destruction of Jerusalem, their keeping of the Sabbath, their assembling at a festival, were signal circumstances in the Roman slaughter, so that their sacrifices were blended with their own blood. And like the fall of Siloam, the ruin of their city and temple in a wonderful

manner overwhelmed them in its own ruins. To both of which circumstances Josephus bears witness. Again, Galilee and Jerusalem are here combined ; thus was it that our Lord's teaching began from Galilee and proceeded to Jerusalem ; and being in vain, it turned into judgment. In like manner, Bede observes, that in their destruction the Roman army began from Galilee, and went from thence to Jerusalem. The following parable forcibly presses home this application to the judgment now hanging over the whole nation³.

“ And He spake this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and came seeking fruit on it, and found it not. And he said unto the vine-dresser, Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find it not: cut it down; why doth it cumber the ground? But he answering said unto him, Lord, leave it alone this year also, until I shall have dug about it, and cast in dung. And if it bear fruit ”—it will be well, says St. Augustin: *“ but if not, afterwards thou shalt cut it down ”* (Luke). This is first spoken of the Jewish nation, which afterwards, by its history, presses home the figure with an awful living comment as addressed to the human soul. As Theophylact says, each one of us is a fig-tree planted in the vineyard of God. And he takes the three years for the three ages of man's life, youth, manhood, and old age. But every other sense, as it is subordinate to the first and literal, so it derives its force and beauty from it. Our Lord's visibly interceding for three years for Jerusalem, and at last weeping over it, speaks eloquently through every other application ; and, indeed, incidentally the words of the parable confirm the place which it here occupies in the Harmony. For although it is not evident

³ See The Holy Week, pp. 87—91.

at what time it was delivered, yet the mentioning of one year more to intervene before the sentence is passed, agrees with its introduction here in the second year.

The three years are interpreted of other periods of time and callings of God, as by St. Ambrose, applying it to the people of Israel: "He came to Abraham, He came to Moses, He came to Mary ; that is, He came in the seal of the covenant, He came in the Law, He came in the body. And all His comings are recognized by His gifts ; at one time that of purification, at another sanctification, at another justification. Circumcision purified ; the Law sanctified ; Grace justified⁴." And Theophylact ; it is as if saying to the Father, "Although through the Law and the Prophets they gave no fruit of repentance, I will water them with My sufferings and teaching, and perhaps they will yield us fruits of obedience." St. Gregory, applying it not to the Jewish nation only, but to the whole race of mankind, says ; "A third time our Lord came to the fig-tree, because He sought after man's nature before the law, under the law, and under grace ; by waiting, admonishing, visiting ; for the minds of some depraved men neither doth the law of nature correct, nor precepts instruct, nor the miracles of the Incarnation correct. But with fear must that saying be heard, Cut it down⁵."

In a secondary sense it may be said of Ministers in the Lord's vineyard, that they are, as dressers of the vine, to prepare, and instruct, and pray for the trees of God planted therein. And St. Augustin speaks of every man in the Church interceding for his brother as the husbandman interceding for the tree. Thus Christ accepts His own children into union with Himself, and makes them to be in Him like counterparts of Himself. Blessed privilege,

⁴ In Luc. vii. 166.

⁵ Hom. xxxi. in Evan.

to be allowed to partake of His offices of intercession and mediation! to partake in His everlasting Priesthood! Having described His own gracious history, He seems to add, Go and do thou likewise! Christ unseen, is tending on the human soul: to "dig about it," by warnings of the Divine judgments, loosing its earthly holds and deep-rooted intertwinings; and to "dung it," by bringing to our sight the abominations of our sins, to induce self-abasement, and remembrances of death and corruption. Allow me one year even yet, must ever be our prayer, and leave me not through the same, but each day and each hour dig about and tend on the tree Thou hast planted.

SECTION XI

THE PARABLES OF THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE TARES

THE former subjects have fallen into their position in this Harmony, for the most part, on account of some expression that intimates continuation: but the last circumstances which we have been considering in St. Luke's Gospel proceed by degrees to speak of our Lord's last journey through Jericho to Jerusalem; whereas, St. Matthew mentions that the teaching by the sea side in parables was on the same day in which some previous circumstances occurred; and those so connected with other events in St. Luke, arising out of them, that we have naturally introduced them also; and here, therefore, must necessarily resume, or again fall back upon the order of St. Matthew; especially as it is in fact confirmed by the other two Evangelists—by St. Mark entirely; by St. Luke,

inasmuch as he introduces this teaching by the lake in parables in the same general circuit of Galilee with the Twelve after the Raising of the Widow's Son and the Sinner Anointing. And this I find confirmed by St. Augustin: "Since St. Matthew says 'on the same day,'" he observes, "(unless the term day be taken after the manner of Scripture for time generally,) it sufficiently proves that this occurred immediately after, or without many things intervening; especially as Mark observes the same order. And Luke, though he makes a transition to other circumstances, yet says nothing that seems at variance with this order⁶." "*On the same day,*" i. e. on the day in which His relatives had come to Him at the house in Capernaum, "*Jesus having gone forth from the house sat by the sea side*" (Matt.). "*And again,*" says St. Mark, meaning, by the term "again," after His teaching the multitudes in the same manner by the sea side from a boat, which he had mentioned in the previous chapter; "*He began to teach by the sea side*" (Mark). "*And great multitudes*" (Matt.), "*a great multitude*" (Mark, Luke) "*were gathered together to Him*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*And they were coming to Him from every city*" (Luke), "*so that He entered into a vessel and sat down*" (Matt., Mark) "*on the sea*" (Mark); "*and the whole multitude*" (Matt., Mark) "*stood on the shore*" (Matt.), "*was by the sea side on the land*" (Mark). On the former occasion St. Mark had said, that "He spake to His disciples that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him;" where it seems to be implied that our Lord was to enter the ship, though it is not said that He did so; and the reason is given because of the pressure of the multitude. On both occasions, also, there

⁶ De Cons. Ev. lib. ii. 88.

seems to have been danger from the Pharisees. Three places of refuge, says a Latin writer, the Lord had—the ship, the mountain, and the wilderness. St. Chrysostom makes the practical observation of the convenience of teaching from a ship, where our Lord might have all His hearers before His face. St. Hilary, Jerome, and others, dwell on the mysterious meaning of the ship as a type of the Church, and the multitude on the shore as the people of the world, those who are without, who are taught in parables.

“*And He taught them*” (Mark), “*And He spake to them*” (Matt., Luke) “*many things in parables*” (Matt., Mark), “*by a parable*” (Luke), “*and said unto them in His doctrine, Hear ye*” (Mark), “*Behold*” (Matt., Mark) “*there went forth a sower to sow*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*his seed*” (Luke). “*And it came to pass*” (Mark) “*as he was sowing, some fell by the way side*” (Matt., Mark, Luke), “*and was trodden under foot*” (Luke); “*and there came*” (Matt., Mark) “*the birds*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*of heaven*” (Mark, Luke) “*and devoured it.*”

“*And some fell*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*on a rock*” (Luke), “*on rocky places*” (Matt.), “*on rocky ground*” (Mark),—St. Augustin, indeed, speaks in one passage as if it were stony places, such as would allow of the stones being gathered; but all the expressions in the Greek indicate soil shallow as being on a rock;—“*where it had not much earth. And immediately it sprung up, because it had no depth of earth*” (Matt., Mark). It is not said that it sprung up immediately although there was no depth of earth, but “*because*” it had no depth; the shallowness of the soil was not only the reason of no continuance, but also of its immediately springing up, for the roots being

straitened, causes the plant to show itself more quickly with a false luxuriance. "*And when the sun was risen, it was scorched : and because it had no root*" (Matt., Mark), "*and because it had no moisture, when it was sprung up*" (Luke) "*it withered away*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). As the Psalmist says of the wicked ; "Let them be even as the grass growing upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it be plucked up ; whereof the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom⁸."

"*And some fell amongst thorns, and the thorns sprung up with it and choked it*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*and it yielded no fruit*" (Mark).

"*And other fell on the good ground*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*and sprung up*" (Luke), "*and bare fruit*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*which kept coming up and increasing, and brought forth*" (Mark) "*an hundredfold*" (Luke), "*some an hundred, some sixty, some thirty*" (Matt.), "*some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred*" (Mark). "*Saying these things He cried aloud*" (Luke), "*and said unto them*" (Mark), "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*" (Matt., Mark, Luke).

The three Evangelists here introduce the explanation of this parable ; but as it evidently occurred afterwards in the house, and "when they were alone," as St. Mark says, and is here introduced by anticipation, perhaps we shall better preserve the thread of circumstances by proceeding to other parables at this time delivered. The mode of teaching was new and remarkable, addressed to a promiscuous multitude ; not merely to teachable disciples, as the Sermon on the Mount, nor to the multitude to whom the Sermon on the Plain was addressed after our Lord's previous retiring from Capernaum ; but to many of

⁸ Ps. cxxix. 6, 7.

various tempers, and among them Scribes and Pharisees, now hardened in unbelief and confirmed in bitter hostility ; speaking to them in parables, as unworthy to have the kingdom more clearly revealed ; yet even thus, with great mercy tempering judgment ; veiling the truth, indeed, but in a manner most simple, engaging, and attractive, which could not fail to win attention, if not a more affectionate interest. It was now after some fearful warnings to them, and after He had denounced His awful woes on the neighbouring cities. The parable is in itself striking as preceding the others, and descriptive of the state of that congregation, and, perhaps, of every other in which since that time it has been read. It is often suggested that the parable may have derived force from the scene around. The time appears to have been after the Feast of Tabernacles, in autumn, after the harvest. The preparations for another year were going on before their eyes ; for a modern traveller mentions their sowing as carried on all the autumn and winter ; and the signs of the past harvest were still lingering, and breathing the solemn feeling which the Prophet Jeremiah expresses : "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." The final expression, proclaimed aloud, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," has a still more solemn interest attached to it, from its recurrence in the Revelation of St. John, while he is the only Evangelist that does not produce it in his Gospel.

This, therefore, is the great teaching by parables from the ship, addressed to those that are on the shore. Whether all these parables were delivered at the time, together with any others, seems uncertain ; some of them appear to be so, and others spoken privately to the disciples in the house, on their appearing not to un-

derstand such figurative similitudes. It is the more uncertain whether delivered at such times, from St. Matthew's habit of throwing together in groups, whether it be discourses, or miracles, or parables. Out of eight such parables which are found in the Gospels, seven are in St. Matthew, and the other one peculiar to St. Mark,—while St. Mark gives also three of these seven that are in St. Matthew, and St. Luke one,—but two of the seven are introduced on a subsequent occasion in St. Luke. Of these seven, four are considered to be in public, and the remaining three in private. Whether they may not all have been delivered in public may be matter of inquiry.

In the parable of the sower, St. Mark, although otherwise coinciding with the other two Evangelists, yet inserts himself alone concerning the good seed, that it continues "growing up and increasing;" and after the explanation of the former parable, he adds this short parable on the subject of this gradual growth of the good seed. And this in St. Peter's Gospel may be compared with what St. Peter himself says in his Epistles on this subject of progressive improvement: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; . . . for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The same was remarkable in the history of St. Peter, who, by continual progress in faith, from great natural instability, became the very rock. Indeed, St. Gregory applies it to St. Peter's history. This parable, therefore, appears in the mind of the inspired writer to be connected with those expressions in the preceding; but whether delivered at this time, or whether it was one of those privately spoken afterwards to the disciples, is uncertain. As it

is introduced by St. Mark, and followed by another parable in public, and the remark that with "many such parables He spake to them," it would seem to be the former; but, on the other hand, as it is given immediately after the explanation of the preceding parable, which we know was in private, it might appear to have been the latter; and also from the internal evidence of the parable itself, as it only speaks of the kingdom with respect to the last of the four hearers, and the secret powers of divine grace in the good; which looks more like a discourse in private.

"And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day," going on with his usual course of daily employment and rest, *"and the seed should spring up and grow in a manner that he himself knows not. For the earth of its own accord,"* or by its own spontaneous formation, *"bears fruit; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit yields itself,"* or is ripe, *"forthwith he sendeth forth the sickle, because the harvest hath arrived"* (Mark). Thus is the character formed for eternity in the elect of God, while "man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening;" and though their language is not heard, yet day unto day and night unto night uttereth knowledge; we know not how, but if we look upon him again after a time, there is a change, by some secret influences hidden from us, as the operations of nature in giving life; until the fruit, bearing thirty, or sixty, or a hundredfold, is in the ear, and he is gathered into the heavenly garner. Thus is it in the heart of the regenerate, a man cannot watch the progress in his own heart; but as the husbandman labours together

with God, and trusts for the issue, so is it in the history of man's soul,—he goes on with his daily work, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and the blessing of God and his own labours co-operate unseen, till he is not the man he was: the members of his new being are fashioned beneath in the earth, in a way that he knoweth not how; but Christ seeth his substance yet being imperfect, and in His book are all his members written. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God Who maketh all." And to this it is added, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand⁹." St. Gregory beautifully interprets the parable of this progress of grace in an individual: he speaks of the seed as the good intention; and night and day as the changes of adversity and prosperity through which he advances to perfection; and the spontaneous production as the preventing grace; the blade is the yet tender endeavour; and the ear the good actions in which the good intention is put forth; and the full corn when virtue is strengthened and perfected in action. Thus was it, he says, with Peter; when the blade was yet tender it was trodden under by the foot of fear; at the Passion, still green through devotion, but in weakness of faith yet tender, and bending at a woman's breath; but at our Lord's Resurrection the ear was put forth; and after Pentecost the full corn was perfected amidst persecutions¹. Others again speak of the three progressive states in man,—as fear, which is the beginning of wisdom; and then hope, which maketh not ashamed; and then the perfect fruit of charity; and thence from a state of grace doth he

⁹ Eccles. xi. 5, 6.

¹ In Marc. cap 16.

pass into a state of glory². How gently, therefore, in the human soul must the tender workings of good be waited for!

Again, the parable speaks of the whole Church. The Son of Man sows the seed, having prepared the ground and done His labour; and then He seems like a man gone into a far country—as He is described in another parable—as a husbandman who has done his work, and leaves it: so is it now,—He has prepared the ground, He has planted His Church; He may be even as one that sleeps while His enemy sows tares; He seems to have left it to itself, waiting for the end; and when He sees it is ripe, He will again visibly return. When the day of Pentecost is fully come, the time of the ingathering, then that which is spoken of in the Revelation takes place, “Upon the cloud sat one like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.” And the voice is heard crying, “Thrust in thy sickle and reap;” “for the harvest of the earth is ripe³.” Thus the parable conveys a striking picture of the visible Church in the world, as the disciples could not then have understood it, while they expected some great and immediate manifestation. And thus does it seem to be spoken of the Son of Man Himself, as He describes Himself and His own subsequent increase, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;” in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundredfold; and in these thus gradually developed.

It is indeed inquired, as He who sows the seed in the heart of man must be Christ, how can it be said of Him that He knows not how it grows? It has been answered

² Vit. Chr. p. 270.

³ Rev. xiv. 14, 15.

that He is as if He knew not, while man is working out his own final destination as yet uncertain, as it is said that not even does the Son of Man know when the time of the end will be. But again Maldonatus observes⁴, that, in the parables, while the whole of one circumstance is likened to the whole of another, the particular parts are not always intended thus minutely to correspond. Origen also says the same⁵. However this may be, these Divine correspondences are manifold, and if one analogy fails to coincide, another will. Christ Himself is sometimes the seed, as in the instance above; and the man himself, in another parable, hides the kingdom in his own soul, as a treasure. This parable only says, then, that man, having the Divine life planted in his soul, knows not how it grows. And more than this, it is not good to turn the eyes of the inner man upon itself, to watch the sensations of progress, the swelling and spreading forth of the tender fibres and roots of that Divine seed within him; it is a life which is hid with Christ in God.

After inserting by the way a private explanation that had afterwards been given of the first parable, St. Matthew proceeds to mention another parable then publicly given in the preaching by the sea side. *“Another parable He set before them, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man sowing good seed in his field. But when men were sleeping, there came his enemy and sowed tares in the midst of the corn, and departed. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the tares. And there came the servants of the householder, and said unto him, Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? But he said unto them, A man that is an enemy hath done this.*

⁴ In Matt. xi. 16.

⁵ In Matt. tom. x. 13.

The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest gathering the tares ye root up with them the corn. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but the corn gather into my barn" (Matt.); as John the Baptist had said of Christ, "He shall gather the wheat into His garner." The expression "while men slept," is something like that in the former parable, if "a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day," as both indicate time imperceptibly passing on until the fulfilment has taken place. In such a field, the tares make the greater show, and seem to rule.

"Interque nitentia cultu
Infelix lolium et steriles dominantur avenæ."

SECTION XII

THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN

THE two next parables in St. Matthew, and the former of the two as given in St. Mark, here occur; for although intermixed in some degree with the private explanations of the first parable, yet they naturally fall into this place of their public delivery; and the position is confirmed by what both of the Evangelists say,—one, that "all these things in parables," and the other, that "many such parables," He did now deliver to the people. These two parables are indeed found together in St. Luke also, on a different occasion, in our Lord's going up to Jerusalem, and they usually in Harmonies occupy a place distinct

from these ; but as no particular connexion, where they are given in St. Luke, marks the time of their delivery, and they both occur together in like manner as they do in this place, they are here introduced as corresponding with the two former Evangelists. St. Chrysostom admirably explains the occasion of this parable being here introduced in connexion with the former two in St. Matthew ; that the Lord in the parable of the sower having spoken of one kind of hearers only out of four being saved ; and then of the tares abounding among the small part that remained ; to take away the apprehension that might arise from the small number of the faithful, He next delivers this parable of the mustard seed.

“Another parable He put forth unto them, saying” (Matt.). *“And He said, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it?”* (Luke). Or, *“And He said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what parable shall we compare it?”* (Mark). *“The kingdom of heaven”* (Matt.) *“it is like a grain of mustard seed”* (Matt., Mark, Luke), *“which a man took”* (Matt., Luke), *“and cast into his garden”* (Luke), *“and sowed in his field”* (Matt.); *“which when it is sown in the earth”* (Mark) *“is less than all seeds”* (Matt., Mark) *“that are in the earth. And when it hath been sown it springeth up and becometh”* (Mark); *“and when it hath increased it is”* (Matt.) *“greater than all herbs”* (Matt., Mark), *“and it becometh a tree”* (Matt.), *“and maketh great branches”* (Mark). *“It grew and became a great tree”* (Luke), *“so that there come”* (Matt.) *“the birds of heaven”* (Matt., Mark, Luke), *“and lodge”* (Matt., Luke), *“and are able to lodge”* (Mark) *“in the branches thereof”* (Matt., Luke), *“under its shade”* (Mark); to tabernacle or make their habitations. Perhaps here it means no more than

settling upon it, as birds are wont to do, it is said, on account of the seed. It is the same word in another place, translated "the birds of the air have nests," i. e. places of abode.

Whether it is the doctrine of the Gospel, or faith, or the Word of God, or Christ Himself, or the Church that is here spoken of—for the Fathers take it in all these senses—yet it will come to the same. It is Christ in the world, in the heart of man, and in every various sense. Thus, in another place, faith is the grain of mustard seed: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed." St. Augustin says this emblem is given on account of the fervour of faith, and as it is said to be an antidote against poisons⁶. But, of course, the more obvious allusion here is to its smallness. As small as the mustard, is an Eastern proverb; but being used by our Lord, it falls in with the Divine depth of application and power of the Sacred Word. As Aristotle says of virtuous principle, "It is small in external show, but in power and worth very far surpasses all things⁷." When looking on a small seed, it is wonderful to think that it should contain a tree; more wonderful, when looking on the feeble appearances of the Gospel while this was delivered, that it should overshadow the earth as it now does, and the powers of the earth take refuge in its shade and dwell among its branches; still more wonderful to imagine that the kingdom in the heart of a believer, which is now so straitened, should be so great in eternity. The image of the tree is from the Old Testament, as "the tree grew and waxed strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth," and "the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof⁸:" meaning, that the great

⁶ Quæst. Evan. lib. i. x.

⁷ Ethics, x. 7.

⁸ Dan. iv. 11, 12.

ones of the earth should find shelter and ease in the kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar. Under the same figure in Ezekiel is the Assyrian empire described: "All the fowls of heaven made their nests in its boughs, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations." In another place in the same Prophet, the Christian kingdom is described under the same type carried on from the former; that "from the top of his young twigs a tender one" shall be taken, which shall become a great tree, so that "under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell⁹." But the figure here is not that of stately trees, such as the cedar, but the "greatest among herbs," or, as St. Basil says, and others explain it, of the shrub¹ kind; so that it becomes even like a tree. "I have myself," says Maldonatus on this place, "seen it in Spain used for wood in heating ovens, and seen large woods of it with birds sitting among the branches."

The shrubs or herbs of which it is said to be the greatest, are mystically interpreted by St. Augustin, Jerome, and Chrysostom, for doctrines, or schools, or systems; as of philosophers, heretics, or statesmen; which begin with great promise and come to an end; though for a time "flourishing like a green bay-tree," of which it is added, "I went by, and, lo! he was gone: I sought him, but his place could no where be found." Such is every system of this world, and which has its roots in things temporal, in distinction from that which is eternal. But the Christian faith is small, as at first scarce believed; small in the humiliation it inculcates; small, as teaching things which are by the world little esteemed. The early Church was small in poverty, in humility, in number;

⁹ Ezek. xxxi. 6; xvii. 23.

¹ λαχάνων φρυγανικῶν.

small in the scandal of the cross, yet fervid in glowing charity; and, as the seed sown "stronger than death;" so that when buried it is strong, when bruised gives forth its virtue, breaks in pieces ere it germinates, till "a little one becomes a thousand." Analogous with this sense, St. Hilary and St. Gregory speak of the seed as our Lord Himself, as despised and buried in the earth: "a grain of seed," says the latter, "planted in the garden of the sepulchre;" "a grain of seed in the humiliation of the flesh, a tree in the power of His Majesty." And St. Ambrose: "Our Lord is a grain when He is buried in the earth, a tree when He is lifted up into heaven²." And as Christ is described as that Tree, "the branches," says St. Hilary, "are the Apostles spread forth from the virtue of Christ, and overshadowing the world with its boughs; into which the Gentiles shall fly to the hope of life³." St. Gregory speaks of the branches as holy preachers. St. Ambrose also, and the pseudo-Augustin, in the Sermons on St. Lawrence on this text, as Apostles and Martyrs⁴. Again: if the tree be the Church, then the branches may be those diversities of doctrine which are suited to every malady of the soul; "the leaves" of which are "for the healing of the nations;" in such their branches holy souls find rest from the cares and toils of the world; and, as the Psalmist says, "sing among the branches," amid such holy doctrines raise their psalms of thanksgiving. That tree, uplifted from the earth, among whose branches good Zaccheus is found, raised on high to behold Christ. Thus St. Ambrose says of the birds, that they are "powers and angels of heaven, and such as by deeds of the Spirit are raised aloft." And Theophylact: "contemplative men,

² In Luc. vii. 180.

³ In Matt. xiii. 4.

⁴ Serm. lxxxviii. App. Par. ed.

sublime in wisdom and knowledge." They find rest among the branches, among the various expansions of the Word and doctrines of the kingdom: they find that secure shelter and repose which cannot be found among things on the earth. Thus St. Jerome: "The branches of the Gospel-tree, which have grown of the grain of mustard seed, I suppose to signify the various dogmas in which each of the birds (or believing souls) takes his rest. Let us, then, take the wings of the dove, that, flying aloft, we may dwell in the branches of this tree, make ourselves nests of doctrines, and, soaring above earthly things, hasten towards heavenly⁵. And St. Gregory, with great beauty, on this passage: "In those boughs the birds find rest; because holy souls, which, on wings, as it were, of the virtues, raise themselves from earthly thought in the sayings and consolations of holy preachers, which are the branches,—find a respite from the weariness of this life⁶."

"*And again,*" after the last parable, "*He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven*" (Luke). "*Another parable spake He unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven*" (Matt.), "*which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened*" (Matt., Luke). The former parable spoke of the kingdom of God as separate from the world; but this parable, as by its principles, blending with and changing the whole of society by a secret influence, even where itself is unseen⁷. The woman is an allusion to the familiar custom, in its being an office usual with women; although in figure put for the Church, and it may allude to the secret mystery of our Lord's being born of a woman. The "three measures" was, probably, in like manner, a

⁵ In Matt. xiii.

⁶ In Marc. cap. xvii.

⁷ See Study of Gospels, p. 258.

quantity in familiar use ; as in entertaining the angels, Abraham said unto Sarah, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal⁸;" or the three may signify an indefinite number ; and St. Chrysostom speaks of the three measures as put for a great abundance. But the figure may further imply a converting of the whole man, body, and soul, and spirit ; or (as St. Jerome says) the rational, the irascible, the concupitive part of the soul ; or the whole character, studies, tastes, and pursuits,—words, actions, and looks ; secretly changing the whole, and bringing all faculties into the obedience of Christ. Thus, when filled with Divine love as with leaven, it renders the whole man that acceptable offering of thanksgiving which was required by the Law⁹. And thus at Pentecost, the very type of the coming in of the kingdom, "two loaves" "baken with leaven" were "the first-fruits unto the Lord¹." Arising out of corruption, and thence deriving its new power, it converts, warms, elevates, renders wholesome and grateful, what was otherwise a dead mass ; till we all become that "one Bread," as the Apostle speaks, made into that Bread by the leaven of charity. "It is charity," says St. Augustin, "from its fermenting, stirring nature ; and the woman is wisdom ; and the three measures three things in man,—the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind ; or those three qualities bearing fruit, a hundred, sixty, or thirty fold ; or the three kinds of men, Noah, Daniel, and Job²."

This leaven is hidden, because, "Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Again : the Church never thrives but in oppression and persecution ; when trampled and hidden is most efficacious in moulding the world to itself. Thus St. Chrysostom

⁸ Gen. xviii. 6.

¹ Lev. xxiii. 17.

⁹ Amos iv. 5.

² Quæst. Ev. lib. i. 12.

speaks of the leaven being thus kneaded in till it had changed all things to itself ; as the Church, by suffering, overcomes the world. Christian principle thus, by a mysterious efficacy, becomes mingled with the mass, influencing the whole, "until the whole is leavened ;" because the Gospel must be preached "to the whole world," and "then cometh the end." Or, if applied to the individual, "till the whole is leavened," says a Latin writer ; "because charity hidden in our mind ought so to increase till it hath changed the whole heart unto its own perfection, which is begun here but completed hereafter." The hiding, moreover, is very expressive of the character of the Gospel ; for the holy soul hides its love from the praises of men ; and then only has it strength when it hides itself ; the mustard seed, and the corn sown, and the leaven, and the treasure in the field, are all hidden ; in this reserve they gather strength from the eye of God, which seeth in secret, till able to expand themselves to the world. "Bene qui latuit, bene vixit."

The reason why leaven was forbidden generally in the Law, and is used figuratively, for the most part, in an evil sense, may be owing to the same kind of reason for which salt is commended and is applied in type for good. Salt preserves from corruption ; leaven arises from corruption, and tends to it : and the sacred sense here opposed to the more usual acceptation, may be like that of the serpent, that type of evil, yet put to represent the death of Christ on the cross as being "made sin for us." Thus it may be like the seed sown and apparently dead ; from death to the world, and apparent corruption, rises the Gospel, to leaven the world, and to destroy it when the whole is leavened : all its transmuting strength is from mortification. The old leaven is evil, but the new leaven is Christ.

“All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes” (Matt.), “and with many such parables He spake the word unto them, as they were able to hear” (Mark), “and without a parable He spake not unto them” (Matt., Mark). “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will declare things hidden from the foundation of the world” (Matt.). “And privately He expounded all things to His disciples” (Mark) ³.

SECTION XIII

PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

THERE is here some little difficulty in knowing when these explanations took place in the house. For St. Matthew says, *“Then having sent the multitude away, Jesus entered into an house”* (Matt.): and it is evident that the exposition of the parables privately to the disciples now takes place: the explanation, indeed, of the first parable, is introduced with the parable itself; but it could not have taken place at that time, and must have been, one would suppose, on this occasion, together with the explanation of the parable of the tares. It may, indeed, appear remarkable, that the three Evangelists should thus fall into the same order of narration when it is not that of time; but it is not the only instance in which the two subsequent Evangelists take up the same course which St. Matthew had adopted: the feast at the house of Levi is given by all three at the time of his call, although it evidently occurred at a later period. And on this occasion it is so natural, that some little diffi-

³ See Study of Gospels, Pt. ii. § iii.

culty and confusion is created by introducing the exposition of the parable in a different place from the parable itself, as we are now doing. St. Jerome, indeed, does suppose that it took place in the ship, and that there the disciples made the inquiry, in an interval after the first parable was delivered : but a little observation of St. Matthew's mode of introducing circumstances will render this not at all necessary ; and St. Chrysostom, on the contrary, rather notices it in the disciples, that they knew the convenient time for making such an inquiry apart from the multitude ; which he thinks is indicated by the very expression in St. Matthew, that " the disciples came to Him," and of St. Mark, that they " came to Him when He was alone." It is natural to suppose that this explanation was given now when He was in the house, when it is mentioned that the subject generally of His teaching by parables is inquired into by them,—and the meaning of the other parable, that of the tares, is expressly given. We may conclude, therefore, that these expositions now took place in the house ; but it is not so evident where the house was : one might have supposed merely from the words, that it was the usual house at Capernaum ; but St. Mark speaks of their passing over on the evening of the same day to the other side of the lake ; and St. Matthew, that after delivering the parables, " He departed thence." His passing over the lake seems also in St. Matthew in consequence of the multitudes ; add to which, that the many things which appear successively to have occurred on this day, render it improbable that our Lord should have again entered the house at Capernaum, and afterwards have passed over. But these things may have occurred in numberless ways beyond all conjecture ; it is very possible that it might have been in some house after crossing the lake that night when the

conversation occurred ; for the whole night could not have been occupied in crossing that lake ; or if it be objected to this, that the circumstance of the demoniacs occurred "immediately" on their landing, which precludes their having entered a house, then it is again easy to suppose that these explanations of the parables may have occurred in a house at some other time ; for there is no reason to conclude that they were given immediately after the parables themselves, only that they were fresh in their thoughts. It is in either case of no importance ; it is sufficient that He was in a house in private, together with the disciples, and some others intimately connected with Him,—for St. Mark seems to mention both.

"*And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the Twelve asked of Him the parable*" (Mark), i. e. the parable the Evangelist had just recorded of the sower. St. Luke, in like manner, says, "*And His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be ?*" (Luke). But St. Matthew puts first the more general question to which the reply seems directed. "*And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered*" (Matt.) "*and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*the mysteries*" (Matt., Luke), "*the mystery*" (Mark) "*of the kingdom of God*" (Mark, Luke), "*of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given*" (Matt.), "*but to others in parables*" (Luke) ; "*but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables*" (Mark). It is remarkable, that St. Mark and St. Luke here state the answer to a question which is not given in either of them, but in St. Matthew. St. Mark's reply is very comprehensive and expressive : "*To them without, all things are done in parables ;*" it is not on this or that occasion only, but all things in the dis-

pensation of God are by dark similitudes, which are but feebly, if at all, apprehended,—while to the faithful disciples of Christ, the same things contain a Divine language speaking to the heart: such are the ordinances of the Law, and such the whole constitution of nature, like the Hand on the wall, words speaking to the wise. “*For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath*” (Matt.). St. Hilary well mentions, that the Jews themselves furnished an instance of this, for having not faith, they lost the Law also which they had⁴, or seemed to have: the knowledge of the Messiah which they had, passed from them to believers. Thus also in the last Judgment, from the slothful servant the talent is taken away and given to the other that used well what he had.

“*Therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand*” (Matt.). Had it been a natural blindness, He would have healed them; but they saw His miracles, saw His Divine goodness; but in seeing, saw not; they heard, but in hearing did not understand. If the inestimable pearls of the kingdom were disclosed to them, they would trample them under foot, and turn to rend the giver. But in the other two Evangelists, the form of expression more strongly describes the Divine judgment. “*That seeing, they may not see, and hearing, they may not understand*” (Luke); or, “*that seeing, they may see and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them*” (Mark); introducing the purport of the Prophet’s words, which St. Matthew states

⁴ In Matt. xiii. 2.

at length. "*And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, Hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing, ye shall see, and shall not perceive.*" In the Hebrew it is in the imperative: "Hear ye, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not;" which, perhaps, contains a mystery of the Divine judgment, which is lost in the Septuagint by expressing it in the future. "*For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them*" (Matt.),—a passage which on another occasion is still more distinctly referred to in St. John's Gospel with this preface: "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes," and the like; "which things," St. John adds, "Esaias said, when He saw His glory and spake of Him⁵;" as if to explain what St. Matthew had not stated. St. Augustin dwells on these passages, and the same in St. John; endeavouring to show, respecting these expressions of His having blinded their eyes, that yet, notwithstanding, it was for their ultimate conversion and repentance for the most part. And St. Chrysostom, too, that they were hardened now and unconverted, in order that they might more abundantly be converted and forgiven hereafter. Yet it cannot be doubted that there is some great awful mystery contained in these statements which are so often made in Scripture, that they could not believe because they were blinded, and they were blinded because they loved not the truth. It is sufficient to know that the mystery is reconcilable with the infinite mercy of God;

⁵ John xii. 39.

that God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live⁶; that He is unwilling that any should perish⁷. Yet still it is a mystery, like that of the existence of evil and of eternal punishment, of which all we can say is, "It is as high as heaven: what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know⁸?"

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matt.). Much the same declaration does our Lord make privately to His disciples in St. Luke, when He gives that gracious thanksgiving to the Father for having revealed these things unto babes. Of Abraham, indeed, our Lord said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see Me, day, and he saw it and was glad;" and St. John says of Isaiah, that "he saw His glory;" but compared with the Apostles, it was but in a glass darkly. Yet in neither case is it spoken universally; for neither among the Jews did all disbelieve, nor among the Apostles were all faithful. Blessed were they who expected Christ before He was come, as the Prophets; more blessed they who saw Him when come, as the Apostles; but most blessed they who believe on Him, though unseen, after He is gone. "Blessed are your bodily eyes that behold My holy ways, gestures, mysteries, miracles; blessed your bodily ears that hear My heavenly doctrines; but what is far more, with the eyes and ears of your mind which God enlighteneth, ye receive, believe, and understand, what the Jews do

⁶ Ezek. xviii. 23. 32.

⁷ 2 Kings xiv. 12.

⁸ Job xi. 8.

not ; for the mind, as well as the body, hath its own eyes and ears ; yea, is itself all eye and ear⁹."

"*And He said unto them,*" in answer to the question which St. Mark says the disciples had asked respecting the parable of the sower, "*Know ye not this parable? How then shall ye know all the parables*" which I have been delivering? since it is the easiest of all, and contains a clue to the rest. A similar surprise is expressed in the next year, when St. Peter asks the meaning of another parable which had been spoken to the people: "What, are ye also without understanding?" "*Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower*" (Matt.). "*Now the parable is this; The seed is the Word of God*" (Luke). "*The sower soweth the Word*" (Mark). The sower went forth to sow the seed, when Christ went forth from the bosom of the Father in the Incarnation, sowing His seed till the end of the world. Moses, indeed, and the Prophets, prepared the ground, but it is Christ who sows the seed, and the Apostles enter into their labours. Or, more extensively, as Christ is the Light that lighteth every one, it is He at all times that soweth the seed, by the law of nature and conscience; by His revelations through the ministration of angels; through the Law by Moses and the Prophets; and now in the Gospel, and through His Apostles and Pastors, He sows with light the new world. The Sower is Christ; the seed the Word of God; the earth the heart of hearers; the sun His grace enlightening: the rain His grace invigorating; winds are temptations that try and strengthen. "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness to spring forth before all the

⁹ Cor. a Lapid. in Matt.

nations¹." But the land on which the seed falls is of various kinds. First, "*they by the way-side*" (Mark, Luke) "*where the Word is sown, are these, and*" (Mark) "*when they hear*" (Mark, Luke), "*when any one heareth the Word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, there cometh the wicked one*" (Matt.); "*Satan cometh straight-way*" (Mark); "*the devil then cometh*" (Luke) "*and taketh away the Word*" (Mark, Luke) "*which was sown in their hearts*" (Mark), "*from their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*" (Luke), "*and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way-side*" (Matt.). Therefore, when good thoughts pass away from the mind, it is by means of an evil spirit watching for that end; and this is the case unless they are taken into the heart, and by action, or reflection, or prayer, made our own. On the contrary, it is the good Spirit brings to our remembrance whatever Christ has said. Here, in the two former Evangelists, it is spoken of as the Word already sown in their hearts, which is thus carried away; but it appears from the figure, that the seed lays on the surface of the ground, and is not received into it; the heart being rendered hard by the treadings of many; by the footsteps of the world; by the passing to and fro of evil thoughts, which render it callous; dried up and parched by habits of sins; worn by the custom of a licentious world; so that there can be no entrance found for the seed. St. Matthew, in this case, speaks of the hearer "not understanding" it. The expression is quite in accordance with the manner in which Scripture sometimes speaks of knowledge as being inseparable from Divine charity or moral goodness, both being expressed by the term light; it confirms also

¹ Isa. lxi. 11.

Aristotle's mode of considering knowledge as coincident with good principle, and obtained by its habitual exercise. They apprehend not its Divine sense, as taken up by other thoughts and desires. It appears, too, that in this case there is not saving faith; for St. Luke says, that the devil takes away the Word, "lest they should believe and be saved." They neither understand, therefore, nor believe.

"And these are they in like manner"—in like manner, that is, with the former, as being both alike unprofitable—*"which are sown on rocky places, who"* (Mark); *"they on the rock"* (Luke), *"when they have heard"* (Mark, Luke) *"the Word, immediately"* (Mark) *"with joy receive it"* (Mark, Luke), *"the Word"* (Luke). *"But he that is sown on rocky places, is he that heareth the Word, and immediately with joy receiveth it; yet hath no root in himself, but endureth for a time"* (Matt.). *"Yet (these,"* Luke) *"have no root in themselves, but"* (Mark, Luke) *"endure for a time"* (Mark), *"when affliction or persecution ariseth on account of the Word, straightway"* (Matt., Mark) *"they are offended"* (Mark), *"he is offended"* (Matt.), *"which believe for a season, and in time of temptation fall away"* (Luke). "They fall away," says St. Luke; as if affording to the Gentiles the meaning of the term "offended," made to fall by an impediment in the way. St. Jerome notices the word "straightway," or "immediately" offended; for where a person gives way after long pressure of persecution, it is not so great a sign of want of faith. St. Peter, when he denied Christ, yielded to persecution; but he had encountered much to which his Lord had long been subjected; and he immediately recovered that fall. These differ from the former, in that with those by the way-side there is an artificial hardness, superinduced by the feet of

men—the ways of the world ; the seed finds no entrance at all, they do not believe. In this it is a natural hardness—that of the rock: the seed is received into the earth, but there is no depth ; they do believe, but only for a time ; there is a sensible delight in receiving it ; it is “with joy ;” and therefore, perhaps, even the more they fall away in affliction ; they are dried up by the fiery sun of tribulation ; having no depth of earth, no patience and steadfastness, no moisture of grace and devotion : the hidden life must be nurtured under ground, or the outward will soon fail. The less room there is for the root in the earth, the more show does it make by luxuriating on the surface. The seed that is more deeply sown is longer in coming up, but more enduring ; “immediately it sprung up, because it had no depth :” and as it had no “moisture,” no refreshing influences of the Spirit around its roots, no sooner was the sun up than it was scorched. Here the sun seems to be used as a figure in the bad sense, for persecution ; as the birds of heaven, in the former case for evil spirits. For if Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, objects the most beautiful and the greatest in nature may be put for the attractive nature of the power that he uses. In the Prophet Isaiah, and in the passage in the Revelation founded upon it, the sun is, in like manner, used in a bad sense, in contrast to the leading of the Lamb by springs of water ; “neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them².” And St. James, “the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass.” And the Psalmist, “the sun shall not harm thee by day.” But here it is not exactly that the sun is evil ; if there had been depth of earth and moisture,

² Isa. xlix. 10. Rev. vii. 16.

the sun would have matured and perfected, and so with persecution, it purifies and perfects the good. And the joy, likewise, with which it is received, may be for good or evil: for although the Gospel, when received deeply into the heart, produces the spirit of mourning and contrition; and he that shall come again with his sheaves goes now on his way weeping; whereas the Pharisees rejoiced for a season in the light of the Baptist; and Herod heard him with gladness (not, alas, with sorrow!)—yet in the good it may be received with joy, as in the parable of the treasure hid in the field: but there it is the joy of selling all that he hath for it—the joy in tribulation: they sold their possessions, and “did eat their meat with gladness;” “rejoicing,” not merely for His Name’s sake, but because they were allowed to “suffer shame for His Name.” “The statutes of the Lord rejoice the heart,” when God discloses His covenant to those that keep them.

“*And these are they which are sown among thorns, such as hear the Word*” (Mark); “*he also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word, and the care*” (Matt.), “*and the cares*” (Mark) “*of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches*” (Matt., Mark) “*and desires concerning other things entering in*” (Mark), “*choke the Word and it,*” or he, “*becometh unfruitful*” (Matt., Mark). “*And that which fell among the thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection*” (Luke). Such then are bringing forth fruit, and are hopeful for a time; the seed is received, and is springing up with promise; but it never comes to maturity. The “deceitfulness of riches” does not appear to mean that riches are deceitful in themselves, disappointing those that trust in them by their

false and unstable nature ; but that there is a deceivableness in their power on the heart, as they take possession of it unawares, and steal it away from eternal treasures. St. Jerome, indeed, Gregory, Maldonatus, and others, take it in the former sense ; but the Greek seems rather to imply this their deceit in winning the heart from God : as in that saying, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." It is received "among the thorns," i. e. the heart is not at first right towards God ; and also "the thorns spring up with it," the evil desires gain strength ; and from the parable of the tares, it appears that these which choke the good seed are from the devil, as well as the birds in the former case. Of the term "choking," St. Gregory elegantly says, "They strangle the throat of the heart with vexatious thoughts ; they let not a good desire enter the heart ; they close up as it were the passage of the vital breath³." There is very much also in the remark of St. Jerome on this place,—that the curse on Adam that he should eat bread among briars and thorns, was in this fulfilled, that the delights of this world are ever encompassed with cares ; and he that seeks the former entangles himself with the latter also. And, we may add, it is so likewise with the heavenly bread, that it is sought for among pains of repentance. Christ, the true Bread, is amidst thorns ; the burning Bush, the Living Light, feeds on thorns ; the Sacrifice is in the thicket among thorns.

"Res est solliciti plena timoris amor,"

the love of any object is accompanied with fears and cares ; but in religion, these are laid on the bosom of Christ, Who careth for us. The first, then, sprouts

³ In Evan. lib. i. Hom. xv. 3.

not at all, but is trodden under and carried away; the second takes root, but not deeply; the third shows the blade, but not the ear; the last, the ear full of grains different in number. And these three states that come to nought might be contrasted with the same in gradual increase towards perfection in the other parable, the herb, the blade, the ear, and then, lastly, the full corn in the ear.

“But he that is sown in the good ground, is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it” (Matt.); *“and these are they which are sown on the good ground, such as hear the Word and receive it”* (Mark), taking it to themselves as their own. *“But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it”* (Luke); keep and detain it deep within them. The variety of terms used by the different Evangelists becomes very expressive; they “hear the Word,” they “understand” it, they “receive” the Word, they “keep” it. *“And they bear fruit”* (Mark, Luke) *“with patience”* (Luke); *“which indeed beareth fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”* (Matt.); *“some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred”* (Mark). The expression in St. Luke, with “patience,” or endurance, in a way that endures, is the same word, as in that “he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved⁴.” It may allude to the patient waiting necessary for the husbandman, as in that of St. James, “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient.” But the expression in St. Luke corresponds with the hundredfold in the delivery of the parable,

⁴ ἐν ὑπομονῇ. Ὁ ὑπομείνας.

and may be equivalent to what is expressed by the other Evangelists, of various degrees of progressive perfection in those who, as St. Peter says, are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The bringing forth a hundredfold is the fulness of the blessing. "Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him⁵." So is it in the true land of promise to the true child of Abraham.

Out of the four kinds that receive the seed, there is but one that bears fruit. In one way only, says Aristotle, are men good, in many ways evil. Good, according to the Pythagorean maxim, is finite, evil indefinite. The Church is one: "My undefiled is but one⁶;" yet one star differeth from another star in glory. As St. Jerome observes, even these that bear fruit are divided into three kinds, and so preserve a correspondence with the other three that are unprofitable; the wayside, the rocky places, and thorny ground in the one, coinciding, as it were, with the thirty, the sixty, and the hundredfold of the other. The difference of course implies both degrees of holiness here, and of happiness hereafter. It may also by the way be taken, as by Theophylact, to represent different degrees of progress in any one of the saints of God, the beginner, the more advanced, the perfect; or the three ways of life, that of purification, the next of illumination, the third of union with God; in each of which the wheat may be gathered into the heavenly garner with different degrees of increase. It is also eloquently applied by ancient writers to classes of persons, or religious states, which arrive at various degrees of perfection. Thus St. Augustin

⁵ Gen. xxvi. 12.

⁶ Cant. vi. 9.

speaks of the hundredfold as applicable to martyrs, the sixtyfold to the virgin, and the thirtyfold to the conjugal life⁷. Cyprian also, and St. Jerome, have interpretations to the same effect. But this mode of exposition must be applied with some consideration, as of such, when weighed in the balance, the first may be last and the last first. St. Augustin also applies it, perhaps more philosophically, to the states of mind in which hardship and death is undergone for Christ's sake, with endurance, or with resignation, or with gladness. Eusebius, indeed, divides altogether into two classes all those that receive the seed; the first, those who have been made worthy of the heavenly calling, but, through sloth or carelessness, fall away; the second, those who multiply the seed sown by bearing fruit.

The expression of our own Liturgy praying for a profitable hearing of the Word, describes it in all its fulness, when we ask for "increase of grace to hear meekly the Word of God, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit;" for this cannot be said of the other three cases. The first hear the Word, but receive it not, for it enters not at all into the heart; the second hear, indeed, and receive it with affection, but only keep it for a time; the third hear, indeed, and receive it with affection, but not pure affection and unalloyed;—receive it, but among thorns, having the love of this world likewise in the heart, and they therefore bring forth no fruit to perfection; but the last, receiving it with the meekness and pure affection of an honest and good heart, bring forth with patience the fruits of the Spirit.

But one thing must be observed in the parable:

⁷ Quæst. Ev. lib. i. 9.

Aristotle remarks that there is this difference in things natural and in morals,—that, in the former, the same causes produce always the same effects; but it is not so in the human soul. There may be among men the same constitutional tendencies, the same nurture, the same circumstances of life in two persons, but not at all the same eventual character, this being the result of moral choice and conduct, and the consequent formation of the will. Thus it is to be noticed in this parable: no seed could find root on the way-side, nor could fail of perishing on the rock, nor of being overwhelmed among thorns; and it must needs bear fruit in good ground according to its nature; and, therefore, no sower would cast it on the road, nor on the rock, nor among thorns. But with the Heavenly Sower it is otherwise, for He casts the seed in all these places, because it is otherwise with the human soul; for although in the event it thus takes place as if the Sower had thus cast His seed, yet there is no natural incapacity in any of these soils of the human heart, for in either case it needs but the will; and those that in the end shall be as if they had been receiving seed on a barren soil, the rock, or thorny places, yet might each of them have been as the good ground. Thus St. Chrysostom says: “Indeed the husbandman, if he had sown in this manner, would reasonably be blamed; for it is impossible that the rock, or way-side, or thorny ground, should become fertile soil. But it is not so in things that have reason; for there the rocky ground may become rich land, the road no longer trodden, the thorns destroyed; for had it been impossible, this Sower would not have sown there⁸.” And St. Augustin has much to the same effect: “Be ye changed, while ye are able; turn up the

⁸ In Matt. Hom. xlv. 5.

hard places with the plough, cast away the stones, pluck up the thorns." "For God sows the seed; but we are His workmen. Be ye as the good land." And again: "It may be the case that they who are the tares to-day, may be the wheat to-morrow*." And indeed there seems no reason why it may not be every day fulfilled in divers ways, so that they who receive the seed as the rocky places to-day, may receive the Word as the good ground to-morrow. And again in some every day the ground may be receiving seed and bringing forth with various degrees of increase, to-day the thirtyfold, to-morrow the sixtyfold, or as it may be. Moreover, every seed may be "yielding fruit after his kind," in the rich variety of the Divine words. Words of meekness, Divine affection, religious zeal, have their responsive fruits in the character of the regenerate in manifold increase; when "the wilderness," in the Divine promise, shall become "a fruitful field." In another, every day the Word may be received among thorns, with affections of the world intermingling and entwining, while the weeds derive all the sustenance of the good seed; the Divine life within struggling, but yet enfeebled, and at length overwhelmed; fruit brought forth, but not to perfection.

SECTION XIV

PARABLE OF THE TARES EXPLAINED

"And His disciples came unto Him, saying" (Matt.),—or, rather, when they had come to Him privately on the subject of the parables, after the public teaching was over;

* Serm. lxxiii. ad loc. in Matt.

—when they had entered into a house, and He had given them the explanation of the parable of the sower, they proceeded to inquire further of this also,—“*Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered, and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world. The good seed, they are the children of the kingdom. But the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil;*” the calumniator, or the accuser, as he is called in the Revelation; “*the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered*” at the harvest time, “*and burned in the fire,*” that they may no longer propagate their seed and spread; “*so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels; and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offences, and them that work the iniquity,*” the lawlessness, or transgression of His laws, as Antichrist is called “*the lawless one,*” “*and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;*” or, rather, “*the wailing and the gnashing of teeth,*” as alluding to the expression often used. “*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*” (Matt.).

The Son of Man is again sowing His seed; but the seed which in the former parable was the fruit they bear, is in this the elect themselves, “born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which abideth for ever.” “I will sow them among the people¹,” as the Prophet says of the children of God. But in manifold senses; He is in the world sowing His Word; in the Church, His children; in the soul, good thoughts

¹ Zech. x. 9.

and affections ; or, may we say, in the understanding, truth ; in the heart, Divine love or knowledge ;—knowledge of self, which causes sorrow, as the Preacher says² ; knowledge of the world, which causes fear ; knowledge of God, which causes love. And “while men slept,” when the Son of Man and His Apostles have gone to their rest, or when the Pastors of the Church are slumbering³, or when the conscience in the soul of man does not watch and pray ; or it may mean merely finding his opportunity under the covering of night, as they who are bent on wickedness are wont to do ; then the enemy sows his tares,—in the world infidelity, in the Church heresies and bad men, in the soul of man evil desires, spiritual deceits, and carnal errors. And these will go on “deceiving and being deceived” unto the end : “There needs must be heresies among you.” The abounding, therefore, of all these things ought not to be a stumbling-block, but occasion for patience, and the exercising of the faith of the saints, while they will ever continue to be saying, “Lord, how long ?” The enemy here that sows his tares comes not forth till after the Son of Man hath sown His good seed ; for “heresies,” says St. Augustin, “and dogmas of perversion which ensnare men’s minds, and precipitate them into perdition, arise not but where the Scriptures are not rightly understood ; and that which is not rightly understood is also with rashness and boldness asserted⁴.” Therefore the enemy sows tares “in the midst of the corn,” heresies mid articles of faith, bad men amongst good, evil thoughts amongst good thoughts. But these things appear not when they are sown. The servants who come to their

² Eccles. i. 18.

³ August. Quæs. in Matt. Chrys. Jerome in Matt.

⁴ In Joan. Evan. Tr. xviii. 1.

master with the complaint, have been interpreted to be the primitive Fathers, who came to God in prayer, being astonished at the existence of unbelief and heresies, and inquiring concerning them. But perhaps it does not admit of this particular description or application; the parable speaks of the existence of evil, and the inquiry explains the difficulty it may present to the Christian; and if the question be literally made at all, it may by the angels or spirits of the just. And, therefore, the command not to separate them before the time, may not at all be capable of being applied to Church discipline and excommunications; for such depend on other reasons, as our Lord says, "If he hear not the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man;" and St. Paul, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person⁵." But the principle applies as an exhortation to patience in a state of such combination; for to every thing good, which the Son of Man sows, the wicked one by its side sows the evil. Christ sows doctrines of truth; the devil, afterwards, manifold errors: Christ sows peace and brotherly love; the devil, contention and envy: Christ, in His field, sows daily good purposes; the devil, carnal desires. The Christian must cleanse himself from all evil; and bear it patiently in others if he cannot amend it. But these errors are for the perfecting of the good; false doctrines tend to strengthen and establish the true; evil men make the good more earnest—and by persecutions and ill will, exercise their virtues. For all Christian virtues imply the active existence of evil against which they contend: there would be no love of truth if it were not tried by error; there would be no peace-makers, if there were no wars; no meekness, if there were no ill usage; no forgiveness, if

⁵ 1 Cor. v. 13.

there were no injuries. Therefore day and night proceed together until the end, when there will be no more night. Day and night together—children of light and children of darkness—brethren and false brethren—true Prophets and false—true Apostles and false Apostles—Christ and Antichrist. The Son of Man hath gone forth for the redemption of man, and, watching His footsteps, the enemy of the Son of Man hath gone forth watching his opportunity; while those slept, says Origen, to whom He had said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” And then the enemy “went his way;” he departed unseen in the night in which he came, as being himself, says Augustin, “most deeply hidden.” But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then, and not till then, appeared the tares; for at first the blade is similar the one to the other. But the servants who come to the Householder could not be the Angels, says Augustin, for we cannot venture to suppose that they could be ignorant of who it was that sowed the tares, or had not perceived them before; nor does our Lord say in the reply, I will tell you at the harvest—but, I will tell the reapers; who are the Angels, and therefore not the same as those who inquire. But the inquiry is when any one first begins to be spiritual he obtains a lively sense of the errors of heretics and of every thing that is discordant to the truth: from whence arises the wish that men should remove them. But the Truth itself replies, that man is not so constituted, as to be capable of making the separation—that by rooting out the tares they would be destroying those who otherwise might eventually become good; or will injure the good, by destroying those who would be the unwilling

⁶ In Matt. tom. x. 2.

means of profiting them⁷. But St. Jerome, that the servants are Angels, who see the face of God.

“Gather the wheat into my barn;” for they are winnowed by the temptations and troubles of the world—separated from the chaff, and set apart from the tares. The tares shall be bound “in bundles;” the wicked shall be separated from the good, and put together—each, as some say, placed with those of like wickedness, and therefore said to be in bundles; and burned in the intolerable anguish, and eternal banishment from the vision of God—the bitterness of which is expressed by the weeping and gnashing of teeth; “the” weeping, with the article, viz. that weeping of all weeping, of which all other is but the fore-type and shadow. The gnashing of teeth, Origen explains, as being angry with themselves⁸. The binding in bundles Gregory interprets to be, that as to the good there are many mansions, and on earth differences of clime according to the heat of the sun, so are there variations of punishment among the wicked; and those guilty of like crimes placed together⁹. As St. Augustin, those guilty of like heresies. And the righteous shall shine as the sun—they shall be even as that visible image of the Son of Man which gives life to the natural world; and if all the world is not to be compared with the value of a human soul, even the sun does not surpass the glory of the righteous soul hereafter—shall be “as the sun” in his brightness, as brightest of created things we know of: in activity, as he travels from one end of heaven to the other; in his subtleness, for he passes through all things; in his impassibility, for his ray suffers injury and stain from no contact. “In the kingdom of their Father,” as made sons of God,

⁷ Quæs. in Matt. xii.

⁸ ὡσπερ ἐλ' ἑαυτοῖς θυμωθήσονται.

⁹ Hom. in Matt. lxii.

and dwelling in His house for ever¹. Sitting with Christ on His throne, which shall be, it is said, "like as the sun before Me," they "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," and "as the stars for ever and ever²." But Origen supposes, that when all clouds and all things that offend are removed, the just shall then all shine forth together as one sun³.

At the close, the warning of having ears to hear is addressed even to the disciples; for in them, also, were there differences of spiritual discernment. And if even they needed ears to hear, in order heartily to apprehend and receive the fulness of this parable, how much more have we?

SECTION XV

PARABLES OF THE TREASURE, THE PEARL, AND THE NET

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in the field; which when a man hath found, he hideth; and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt.). It is like treasure hidden,—the riches that are hid in Christ; "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom; that of which the Psalmist speaks, "Thou art a place to hide me in;" "Thou shalt hide them privily by Thine own Presence." "Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle." The treasure is hidden, it is the life which is hid with Christ in God. But the man also himself who hath found the same hath hidden it; for to hide a treasure nature itself teaches,

¹ Vita Christi, p. 269.

² Dan. xii. 3.

³ In Matt. tom. x. 3.

“as one fearing to lose it,” says St. Jerome. But the field which he buys is not hidden; for such is his Christian calling and exercise in all good works—but the grace thereof, and the blessing, and the treasure, are hidden therein: eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but God revealeth it to them that wait for Him. The secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him. It is “the hidden manna.” Such are, indeed, the very nature of duties of devotion, for they are to be done as unto God in secret; they are of “the hidden man of the heart.” And he selleth all—for “unless a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple”—but for joy thereof he selleth it. He rejoiceth and is exceeding glad, even “as one that findeth great spoils,” in selling all things, because his reward is great in heaven. As St. Paul testifies: “For Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” They are bought—“for heavenly treasures,” says Hilary, “are not obtained without the loss of this world⁴.” He that would find wisdom must “search for her as for hid treasures⁵.” The place that contains it is indeed bought—bought by self-renunciation; but the treasure itself is not to be bought, for it is beyond all price: it is not bought, but found: it is found, for it is the free gift of God: it is valued by faith; it is hid by humility; by love it is rejoiced in. St. Hilary interprets this treasure to mean the Godhead hidden in Christ’s flesh; St. Augustin, as the knowledge of Christ in the Scriptures: St. Jerome, as both of these⁶: Gregory, as the desire of heaven. Doubtless, in every way, it is Christ: “in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one

⁴ In Matt. xiii. 7.

⁵ Prov. ii. 4.

⁶ In Matt. xiii.

pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." He is seeking "goodly pearls," and the one which he finds of great price is of the same nature, a goodly pearl: and pearls in the Gospel, such as we are told not to cast before swine, are great Divine truths or holy principles. He, therefore, that finds the one of great price, is already engaged in seeking for that which is holy and good, is disciplining himself in good works and principles, when he finds that one of great price which is the knowledge of Christ Crucified. But he, also, as the one in the last parable, obtains it at a great cost, even selling all that he hath. It is found among the shells of the sea, hidden with Him Whose footsteps are in the mighty waters: it is found not by chance, but by those that are seeking diligently; "they that seek Me early shall find Me." The treasure in the field is casually found, "I was found of them that sought Me not:" the pearl, by one in earnest inquiry, saying "Who will show us any good?" It is "one pearl," single and alone, as exceeding all others, admitting of no other in comparison with it; for the sake of which all others, even goodly pearls, are set aside as nothing worth: as love of Christ swallows up and annihilates love of parents and every other duty; such as were in themselves goodly pearls, but, compared with this, are found nothing worth: the one thing needful, which good Mary chose: and of great price, for if a man were to give all that he hath for love, it would be utterly contemned'. "He hath gone," which implies active life and movement of affections. "Blessed is that merchantman who knows how to seek, not for things hurtful, as the ambitious; not for things useless, as the curious; but for things healthful, as the Saints. And blessed he, who, when he hath found the good merchandize, knoweth

⁷ Cant. viii. 7.

how to traffic for the same : who hath gone away from self by mortification of the flesh ; hath sold earth for heaven by renunciation of all things, and obtained it by subjection of his own will⁸.”

It is one pearl, says Chrysostom, for the truth is not manifold, but one. St. Hilary speaks of the merchantman as one long practised in the Law. St. Jerome, too, of the goodly pearls as found in the Law and the Prophets. St. Augustin, of one seeking good men or good precepts, and then finding the Word of God.

Full of Divine meaning and instruction is the account which Origen and some others give of the formation of pearls : it is conceived, he says, of the dew of heaven, which the fish opens its shell to receive ; and the quality of the pearl depends on the skyey influences under which it is imbibed. Thus it is with this pearl of great price, it is not of earthly birth, but of the dew and ray from heaven received in the sea of Baptism ; and if it be in the clear morning of our days, it is more pure and lustrous ; but if not till under the evening sky of our life, it is more clouded and obscure. Many are the goodly pearls—but one of great price. “The depth saith, It is not in me : and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof⁹.” The Prophets Origen supposes to have imbibed this celestial dew, and conceived from heaven the Word of truth. This merchantman had been seeking of them goodly pearls, till he finds this one of great price, the Christ of God ; in finding which all others are found, and in comparison of which they are little worth. “That which was made glorious had no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth :” and “that which is in part shall be done away, when that

⁸ Vita Christi, p. 273.

⁹ Job xxviii. 14—19.

which is perfect is come¹." Moses and Elias were glorious on the Mount—but they are gone, and Christ is found alone; the one pearl of great price, radiant with the Everlasting Light. As St. Augustin says, "Lustrous with the brightness of truth, and solid with the strength of eternity, and throughout like to itself with the beauty of divinity; and when the shell of the flesh is penetrated, will be known as God²."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind; which, when it was filled, they drew up on the shore, and having sat down, they gathered the good into vessels, but the bad," literally, the putrid and corrupt, "they cast out. So shall it be at the end of the world: the Angels shall come forth, and separate the wicked from the midst of the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." This terminates in the words of the former parable, where the Angels having separated the tares from the wheat, cast them "into the furnace." And it may be observed, that when our Lord speaks of the place of torment, He appears to repeat the same expressions, as in the threefold repetition of that saying, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." These last words drop the parable;—for the fish that are bad are not cast into the fire;—and seem descriptive of that dreadful reality, expressing it literally, or more forcibly by a new figure³. Gregory says of this verse, "To fear becomes us here rather than to expound." St. Chrysostom speaks of it as a "fearful parable."

"Behold, I will send for many fishers⁴," said the Prophet; and our Lord Himself to His Apostles, "I will

¹ In Matt. tom. x. 7. 10.

² Quæs. in Matt. xiii.

³ See Ezek. xxii. 17—22.

⁴ Jer. xvi. 16.

make you fishers of men." To them the net of the Church is committed unto the end: the net, says St. Jerome, framed of Evangelic doctrines from the Old and New Testament; the net to draw men out of the great deep, from the jaws of that leviathan that taketh his pastime therein, amid the vastness and the bitterness of the sea of this tumultuous world. It gathers "of every kind," every living creature "the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind;" so are there diversities among men, not occasioned by nature, but by their own free choice of good or evil⁵. It is as at the great Feast, "they gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good;" described as "the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind⁶." And when it was filled, "when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in," when the number of the elect is accomplished, they drag it forth on that stable and eternal shore, sitting down thereon in endless rest and peace. The Ark, filled with animals clean and unclean, opens on the everlasting hills. As long as the net is in the deep, the good and bad are indistinguishable from each other, as Judas among the Twelve, as Ham with his brethren in the ark; but at the end, when the net is brought to shore in the great manifestation of the Judgment, all will be known. Then shall they be brought from the darkness of the deep, the abyss of sin and misery—brought "into the light," says St. Hilary, "of the true sun." "They shall separate the wicked from the just:" oh, how hard the separation for the wicked, because irremediable, irrecoverable! Then shall the Church, cleansed from all stain, be presented to the Father without spot. The good shall be cast into vessels, taken into those many heavenly mansions which in St. John are spoken of. The Wise Virgins taken in, and

⁵ Orig. in Matt. tom. x. 11.

⁶ Matt. xxii. 10. Luke xiv. 21.

foolish shut without, and the door of the kingdom closed. The bad in bundles—the good in vessels—each in their respective abodes suited for them—in those heavenly places where one star differeth from another star; or in those depths in which there is still a lower depth of punishment.

There is a great resemblance between this parable and that of the tares, in their purport—but yet a difference: from that of the tares it might have been supposed that good and bad Christians would be mixed together in the world at large after the seed of the Gospel has been sown; but this parable still more distinctly declares that in the net, in the visible Church itself, there will be this intermixture of good and bad. Again, Origen⁷, Augustin, and St. Chrysostom suppose that the tares are rather heresies⁸ and heretics prevailing; but here the bad fish are men in the Church of evil lives. In the termination of this parable, it is worthy of notice, that although the Angels are distinctly spoken of as making the separation, yet the parable speaks also of those who drew the net ashore sitting down and gathering the good into vessels and casting the bad away; which seems to imply that the Apostles, who draw the net ashore, part asunder at last the contents of that net. Thus it touches on a subject in other places referred to with the same mysterious indefinable allusion, of the Saints sitting in judgment, “Ye shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;” and St. Paul, “Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the world?” But still it is, also, as in the other parable, distinctly declared that the Angels make the separation. In another place, it is Christ Himself Who divides the sheep from the goats.

⁷ In Matt. tom. x.

⁸ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιούντας λογισμούς. Origen.

The parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven spoke rather of the power and efficacy of the Gospel; the Hid Treasure and the Pearl, of its inestimable worth; this last, of its extent and termination. The former parables spoke of it as existing in the world; this, of the end of all things: the two foregoing spoke of love—but this inspires earnest fear. This parable is the last of the seven recorded together in St. Matthew; the eighth, if we include the one given by St. Mark as delivered also at the same time. The seven indicate the kingdom in the world; the eighth includes also the termination of the same in things eternal^o. The eighth is the Lord's Day, the first day again returning into itself, the coming in of the new Creation, the Day of Light—the Ark of Noah, the eighth person, landed on the everlasting shore. These parables, therefore, though all are at all times fulfilling and being fulfilled, yet are supposed in their very order to be prophetic of the successive stages of the Church; although, as all prophecies, not to be altogether understood but in the fulfilment. In this gradual prophetic succession it was first a progress discernible and on the surface, as the sowing of corn, when in its early origin the Sower sowed His seed, going forth from the bosom of the Father; then, as He slept, is its sensible growth and increase: and in the third parable they come with surprise to the householder to speak of the Tares that are seen rising in the midst of it, and blending with the corn; then the Mustard seed, after such small beginnings, spreads wide its branches in the visible Church established, and affords shelter in its branches; then in the Leaven, all the world is becoming secretly influenced by its doctrines—extensive, efficacious, and working unseen. And when, again, scarce visible on

^o See Resurrection, pp. 279—282.

the surface of things, it is found and highly prized by some as a hidden Treasure; and afterwards in some mysterious way, while all the other parables are being still fulfilled together, yet a more marked character succeeds, and becomes prominent, which is as a Pearl of great price; until at length and at last the hidden Net is being drawn, unseen, to shore, with all the inclosed, both bad and good; when the Lord, Who knoweth those that are His, separates His elect, and gathers them into His secret abodes of eternal blessedness.

“*Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord.*” From this, their termination, it seems probable that all these latter parables were delivered in private to the disciples, as here given, after the explanation of the former parables. “*Then said He unto them, Therefore,*” or on this account, “*every Scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*”—i.e. every teacher of the Law made a disciple of the Gospel—“*is like unto a man who is an householder, who bringeth out of his treasures things new and old*” (Matt.). It is difficult to see the exact bearing of this on what preceded, which the expression, “on this account,” or “therefore,” implies; for although our Lord’s teaching, and that of His Apostles, abounds in things taken from the Old Testament with a new application, yet it does not seem to be the case in these parables. It may be, that this introductory term is a mere form of affirmation, and meant as a description of the Gospel, in which the old dispensation passes into the new, its ordinances, institutions, precepts. Or it may be of this general meaning: the kingdom of heaven, in the Old Testament, was veiled under various figures; in the New, it is veiled under these parables: the Christian minister will be able to discern and to unfold

the kingdom under both of these. Or, as St. Augustin says, "He who shall have understood the Old Scriptures unfolded in parables, taking the rules of the same from the New." "But this the Jews could not, having the veil on their hearts¹." St. Jerome, that "what they preached in the Gospels they proved by the words of the Law and the Prophets. Whence the Bride speaks in the Song of Solomon, 'New and old I have laid up for thee, O my beloved².'" Origen, very beautifully, that "a Scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven, in the most simple way of understanding it, is, when from Judaism one receives the ecclesiastical discipline of Christ; or, in the deeper sense, when one obtains access by the letter of Scripture, and thereby ascends to the spiritual things which are called the kingdom of heaven³;" that is, when one passes from the letter to the spirit; for a Scribe signifies one versed in the letter; and thus the Scribe who saw the love of God to be better than all external ordinances, was near the kingdom⁴. But the expression "Old" need not, necessarily, be confined to the Old Testament; it may refer to the things of nature or philosophy, as known of old, and now receiving the stamp of Christian faith; for the parables unfolded the new things of the kingdom from the old things of daily experience, such as afforded their imagery and similitudes. And so Cornelius a Lapide. The same writer, together with Maldonatus, takes up St. Augustin's supposition, that the term "treasure" may allude to the parable of the hid treasure, and that the expression, "on this account," refers to it. But this is not obvious. The householder is, of course, the apostle or minister, as in the

¹ Quæst. in Matt. xvi.

³ In Matt. tom. x. 14.

² Cant. vii. 13.

⁴ Mark xii. 34.

expression, "Who is that faithful and wise steward whom the Lord shall set over His household?" He is like unto a householder, i. e. says Origen, he is like unto Christ; and the authorities of the Old and New Testament are the nets with which he takes souls.

SECTION XVI

TREATMENT OF DIFFERENT FOLLOWERS

"And the same day, when the evening was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him, even as He was, in the vessel. And there were also with Him other little ships" (Mark). But St. Matthew here speaks in general terms: *"And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed thence"* (Matt.). It was long before this period that this Evangelist introduces the account of His crossing the lake; but it is St. Mark that informs us that it occurred on the evening of this same day on which the parables were delivered, and it must have been already late in the day when they were spoken. St. Mark's account might imply, that at the termination of the parables, our Lord, in the vessel in which He then was teaching, together with other small vessels around Him, proceeded to cross the lake. But the incidental expression in St. Mark, of their taking Him "as He was" in the vessel, and of His dismissing the multitude, *might* indicate, that after the parables, our Lord had again been on shore before He crossed the lake; and, *if so*, it may be that the private conversation with the disciples "in the house," respecting

the parables, had intervened, and that the crowds around Him were now again assembling as He went forth towards the lake. And if it is thus considered, we may introduce the account as it stands in St. Matthew, respecting our Lord's answer to two persons who offered to follow Him, just before His crossing the lake. The difficulty is, that these two occur, together with the same questions made, and the same replies given, in St. Luke, on a very different occasion, when our Lord, some time subsequently, "was setting His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem;" and it may be, that St. Matthew only introduces them where he does by association of subject; and that, when he speaks of our Lord's departing from the crowds, he mentions two different occasions of His speaking to different persons, in order to show that He sought not followers as a human teacher would, but dealt with each according to his temper of heart. And, perhaps, the thought was in the Evangelist's mind of this occasion, when He was taken for the night in an open boat, having no where to lay His head, which this His expression to the Scribe declared. But as it is not evident from either of the Evangelists at what time they took place, they may be well placed here as in St. Matthew.

"Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He commanded to depart to the opposite side. . And there came to Him one who was a Scribe, and said unto Him" (Matt.). "And it came to pass as they were going in the way,"—i. e. as we here place it, from the house to the sea-side—"a certain one said unto Him" (Luke), "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the fowls of heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt., Luke). The answer here given is

such as takes one by surprise ; here is an offer made to follow Christ which He seems to reject, and there is no evidence on the surface of any reason why the person should be thus declined ; but our Lord answered, as He usually does, to the heart of the speaker, seeing that the offer was accompanied with little reflection of what it was to follow Christ. This is the more apparent from what St. Matthew mentions, that the man was a Scribe. The Pharisee and Scribe never appear without something of human pride. The questioning, whether "this man were a prophet," with Simon at the table—the coming by night with Nicodemus—the unwillingness to part with riches with the young ruler—these are unlike the self-renunciation of the fisherman and the Publican. Yet never were words more full of promise : "I will follow Thee wheresoever Thou goest." He was as one that cries, "Lord, Lord," but enters not the kingdom. Our Lord does not reject his offer, but proves the sincerity of his intention ; not by open exposure, but by leaving his own conscience to bear witness, "Not reprehending," says St. Cyril, "but correcting." "The Lord requires not specious service," says St. Ambrose, "but purity of affection." The foxes have holes, where they may hide and be at rest ; the birds have their nests, to which they may ascend and escape ; but the Son of the Virgin hath no lodging-place on earth wherein to lay His head, but the stormy boat, the manger—not His own—the cross, and the sepulchre of another. The covetous have places in the earth ; the ambitious build their nests on high ; but neither of these have place with Christ. St. Augustin says, that, "moved by the miracles of the Lord, he was willing to follow Him from empty vanity, which is signified by the birds ; but that he feigned the obsequious-

ness of a disciple, which the fox implies⁵," And so, speaking of him in another place⁶, "The birds fly aloft, as the proud; the foxes have holes, as the insidious. Pride and deceit may have their habitations within thee, but Christ hath not within thee where He may lay His head." In like manner, St. Gregory⁷ and St. Bernard.

But the next is a very different case, and serves to show, that our Lord, in speaking as above, was not rejecting those who would come to Him. "*And He said unto another, Follow Me,*"—as He had done to St. Matthew, and others,—"*but he said*" (Luke). "*And another of His disciples said unto Him*" (Matt.), "*Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him*" (Matt., Luke), "*Follow thou Me: and*" (Matt.) "*leave the dead to bury their own dead*" (Matt., Luke). But as showing that the command to follow Him did not merely imply personal attendance, but becoming a thorough disciple, St. Luke, introducing the subject about the time when the Seventy were sent forth, adds another to the first command, "*but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*" (Luke). St. Clement, of Alexandria⁸, says it was Philip the Apostle; nor is there any thing in the account that proves the person may not have been already a disciple. It is like his character.

In this, as in the former case, there is doubtless much left unsaid which would serve for a fuller explanation of our Lord's answer; there is all reverence in asking permission, and for an occasion so holy, but this is denied, by Him Who knoweth what is in man. The first, a deceitful and proud man, who had come to Him feignedly, with dissimulation, He rejected; the second, a man

⁵ In Matt. Quæst. v.

⁷ Moral. xix. 1

⁶ In Ps. xc. 7.

⁸ Strom. lib. iii. cap. ii.

simple and devout, who sought Him in truth, He drew on to more perfect self-renunciation. St. Cyril supposes that the request implied sustaining an aged father until death, but the literal acceptance is most usual. "Had he gone to bury the dead," says Chrysostom, "the mourning and cares of the funeral, and settling of his affairs, like waves rising after waves, would have borne him further and further from the harbour of peace." Thy father forsaketh thee, the Lord taketh thee up; thy father is dead, follow thou Me, and I will be to thee a far better Father. Far greater and more urgent is it to raise souls to life with Me, than away from Me to cover the dead body. "The desire was good," says St. Ambrose, "but greater the hindrance; for he who divides his zeal, draws off his affection⁹." And St. Chrysostom: "It was unsuitable that he who once believing in the Son of God, hath begun to have the living God for his Father, should be thinking of a dead parent; and, therefore, the Lord showed that the faith of Christ was to be preferred to such duties of piety, for whose sake we are commanded to leave living parents." "A father is to be honoured," says Augustin, "but God is to be obeyed. A parent is to be loved, but the Creator to be preferred. I call thee to the Gospel: for another work thou art needful to Me¹⁰." Blessed constraint, and severity most sweet, that no contingency, however pressing and affecting, is to interfere with the great concern of following Christ, our only true rest and peace in bereavement and affliction!

"And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee, but first of all permit me to bid adieu to those in my house. But Jesus said unto him, No one having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of

⁹ In Luc. vii. 34.

¹⁰ Serm. c. Par. ed.

God" (Luke). A man looking back in ploughing, would be crooked and unsteady in the course before him; and therefore it becomes a proverbial expression for the effect of a wavering mind not sufficiently earnest in its purpose. The bidding adieu, in whatever sense the words are taken, evidently implied, if not a turning back in heart to Egypt, nor a looking back to Sodom with Lot's wife, yet a different mind to that of the Apostles, who, when summoned, "immediately" gave up all; or of St. Paul, who says, "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood;" and sets himself as an example, as one "forgetting those things which are behind;" or of the Psalmist, who says, "I made haste, and prolonged not the time;" or of the Bride, "Forget also thine own people and thy father's house: so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty. For He is thy Lord God." "The East calleth thee," says Augustin, "and thou turnest thyself to the West¹." In this the Gospel comes in contrast with the Old Testament, where Elisha says to Elijah, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee¹." The Old Testament says, "Honour thy father and mother;" the New, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me."

This last incident is added by St. Luke only; and it may be observed that it is again of quite a different character to the other two; so that all three together serve wonderfully to illustrate the manifold Wisdom of His dealings Who weighs the spirits of men. "In a different manner," says St. Augustin, "did the Lord treat them; when one offered to follow Him, he was rejected; another

¹¹ Serm. c. Par. ed.

¹ 1 Kings xix. 20.

presumed not, and was stirred up ; the third was delaying, and reproved²."

SECTION XVII

THE TEMPEST STILLED ON THE LAKE

It was therefore at this time that St. Mark says, "And dismissing the multitude, they take Him as He was in the vessel ;" and St. Matthew, after mentioning His answers to the two who came to Him, proceeds: "*And when He was entered into the vessel, His disciples followed Him*" (Matt.). "*And it came to pass on one of those days that He entered into a vessel, and His disciples ; and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake, and they launched*" (Luke). The distance straight across the lake is, on an average, about six miles. The multitude had witnessed the miracles, but His own disciples He reserves for trial, to succeed the high thoughts they might be entertaining ; allowing them first to be tried, in order to fix the miracle and their deliverance more strongly on their minds. Thus Moses was first alarmed at the serpent, and then found therein the mighty power of God. They were, moreover, persons whose occupation was on the waters. He had shown His miracles on land, and now "they that go down to the sea in ships," "these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders on the deep." "*And as they were sailing He fell asleep*" (Luke), "*and, behold, there was a great tempest on the sea*" (Matt.) ; "*and there was a great storm of wind*" (Mark) ; "*and there came down on the lake a storm of wind*" (Luke).

² Serm. c. Par. ed.

"*And the waves beat on the ship, so that it was now full*" (Mark); "*and they were filled and were in danger*" (Luke), "*so that the vessel was covered by the waves*" (Matt.). The difference in the description may, in some degree, be owing to the position of the narrators. St. Matthew, as he received them in his house on their return, might have been now on the shore watching the vessel, either in the moonlight, or before the evening had entirely closed in; but the account given by St. Peter's Evangelist is more like that of one himself in the boat. And so also what follows: "*And He Himself was in the stern, sleeping on a pillow*" (Mark); "*on the pillow,*" rather, or thing to support the head; taken "*as He was into the boat,*" wearied and overcome by night-watchings in prayer, and teaching by day. Yet it was God Himself, Who keepeth over His people a sleepless and eternal watch, while He seems to them in His Providences as asleep, and as one that heareth not, while He is trying our faith, and waiting for our prayers. "*But He was asleep. And His disciples*" (Matt.) "*they came*" (Matt., Luke), "*and awake Him, saying*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*Lord, save us*" (Matt.); "*Teacher*" (Mark); "*Master, Master*" (Luke); the different terms of the Evangelists become together very expressive of their haste and terror; "*we perish*" (Matt., Luke); "*carest Thou not that we perish?*" (Mark). "*And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?*" (Matt.). They had faith, for they said unto Him, Save us; but their faith was small because of their apprehension, saying, We perish. Such fears are unsuitable in one who knows that he is in the hands of God, and that Christ is with him; not from an assurance that he will escape death, but from a sense of God's unfailing care and love. Such was the mind of St. Paul, in a strait betwixt

two, and knowing not which to choose, whether life or death, for the latter of these was more to be desired, the former more expedient; and therefore leaving it to God to choose, contented with His choice; whereas, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" is the expression of unbelief, "for God careth for us," whatever may occur.

"Then" (Matt.) "*He arose, and rebuked the wind*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*and the sea*" (Matt.), "*and the swelling of the wave*" (Luke): we might have curiously inquired in what way He rebuked them as here mentioned, but St. Mark tells us His words: "*And He said to the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased*" (Mark), "*and there was a (great,*" Matt., Mark) "*calm*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). When the wind ceases, there is usually a swell of the waves for some time: it was not so now, but "a great calm²." With such simplicity is mentioned a scene beyond what painter or poet could pourtray: in sublime majesty second to nothing since the creation of the world, but in the calm of one departed from the body and escaped from the storms of this world to be with Christ in peace. "*And He said unto them*" (Mark, Luke), "*Why are ye so fearful? How is it ye have not faith?*" (Mark). "*Where is your faith?*" (Luke). "*But the men were astonished, saying*" (Matt.); "*and they were afraid with a great fear*" (Mark); "*they were afraid and astonished*" (Luke), "*and said one to another*" (Mark, Luke), "*Who then is this?*" (Mark, Luke), "*What sort of a man is this?*" (Matt.) "*that even the winds and the sea obey Him*" (Matt., Mark), "*that He commandeth the winds and the water, and they obey Him?*" (Luke). "At three things," says a Latin writer, "were they

² See The Nativity, p. 413.

amazed,—a man sleeping, a God commanding, the creature obeying⁴.” He often exposes us to straits, because He wishes us to pray to Him. He caused on the sea a great storm, that the greatness of the storm might occasion great fear, and great fear might urge them to earnest prayer, and earnest prayer might lead Christ to the working of a great miracle, and the great miracle might lead men to faith and wonder.

Thus at the Crucifixion the Lord was asleep on the hard pillow of wood, and for the violence of the storm that raged even the Apostles trembled, when He arose and restored to their troubled hearts a great calm, saying, Peace be unto you! As in Jonah, the type of the same, “Oh sleeper, arise, call upon thy God, that we perish not!” The boat again is the emblem of the Church, wherein Christ is to us often as if He were asleep, while He is trying our faith and waiting for our prayers. And this may be prophetic of the days of Antichrist, when it will be covered with the waves, and ready to sink, and the rulers of it will cry out with faith failing, when Christ shall arise, and allay the storm, and there will be a great calm,—that peace which shall be before all things approach the everlasting shore. The sleeping of Christ in His Providence, is Divine permission in tribulations, wherein He waits for the patience of the good, and repentance of the wicked; and His waking up, is when the good are calling to Him, by their prayers, “Up, Lord, why sleepest Thou? Awake, and be not absent from us for ever.” And then “He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still.” St. Augustin often applies this in a figure to any temptation, wherein Christ is asleep in the soul, on account of our forgetfulness

⁴ Vit. Chr. p. 200.

of God, till awakened by faith, He arises, and bids the storm to cease⁵.

SECTION XVIII

THE DEMONIACS AMONG THE GADARENES

“And they sailed to shore” (Luke); *“and came to the other side of the sea”* (Mark), *“and when He was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes”* (Matt.), *“into the country of the Gadarenes”* (Mark, Luke), *“which is over against Galilee”* (Luke). Gergesa is not known, unless it is an ancient name of Tiberias; but Geraza is a city of Arabia beyond Jordan, near Mount Galeed, where Laban overtook Jacob, in the tribe of Manasseh. Gadara in Perea is likewise an inland town; but it is mentioned by Josephus as inhabited mostly by heathens, which this passage indicates, and living in Greek customs. *“And as He went forth”* (Mark, Luke) *“out of the vessel”* (Mark) *“upon the land”* (Luke), *“there met Him”* (Matt., Mark, Luke) *“straightway out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit¹, who had his dwelling in the tombs”* (Mark), *“a certain man out of the city who had devils for a long time; and had on him no clothing; and abode not in any house, but in the tombs”* (Luke); but St. Matthew, describing him together with a maniac companion, *“two possessed with devils coming forth from the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no one was able to pass by that way”* (Matt.), or along the road that led by. The other two Evangelists

⁵ In Joan Ev. xlix. 19. Serm. xxix. 10, &c.

¹ See Nativity, Pt. iii. § ix.

speaking of one only ; as the most notorious of the two, says Augustin² ; St. Chrysostom, as the most savage and dreadfully afflicted³. We may combine both by supposing him the one most known for the terror he inspired. Of this one, the most remarkable, St. Mark proceeds with a more particular description : *“And not even with chains was any one able to bind him ; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces ; and no one had power to subdue him. And at all times, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones”* (Mark). The tombs were caves in the rocks wherein the dead were deposited ; as the cave of Machpelah ; the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea ; and these were outside the cities.

In the former miracle we beheld the visible creation obeying the Creator ; in this the invisible ; in the former things insensible ; in this spiritual. The former teaches us to fly under the shadow of His wings, from the evils of this world ; this, from the worse evils of the next. The storm at sea was not more awful than this tempest in the spiritual world. The nakedness, the chainless fury, the mountains and tombs, the crying night and day, the injuring others and himself ; a sight indescribably fearful ; as it were affording a glimpse into the unseen abyss of woe. A lively emblem of a spirit of lust in possession of the soul, dwelling in uncleanness, as of the tomb, breaking every fetter of restraint, night and day, self-tormenting, self-reproaching, guilty conscience crying, and self-beaten with passion ; cast out of the city of God ; and attacking all, and hindering all, and polluting all that would pass that way.

² De Cons. Ev. ii. 56.

³ Hom. in Matt. 28.

Thus St. Mark describes the person himself who was possessed, as he now came to view; St. Luke speaks rather of the evil one possessing him, which he introduces when he comes to the more distinct mention of his being cast out; saying, "*For oftentimes it had seized him; and he was bound and kept in chains and fetters; and rending in twain the chains, he was driven by the devil into the wilderness*" (Luke). Thus in the parable, the unclean spirit cast out, wandered in the desert; thus the devil met our Lord in the wilderness; thus among solitary mountains abound accounts of supernatural appearances. St. Augustin applies it spiritually, as "driven into wickedness beyond the custom of men⁴." St. Ambrose, as "driven into desert places, such, forsooth, as are barren of all spiritual virtues; fled from the Law, separate from the prophets, removed from grace⁵."

"*And when he saw Jesus*" (Mark, Luke) "*from afar off, he ran*" (Mark), "*and crying out, fell down before Him*" (Luke) "*and worshipped Him. And crying with a loud voice, said*" (Mark, Luke): but St. Matthew, speaking of the two, "*And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we*" (Matt.), but one among them, by far the more prominent, "*What have I,*" (Mark, Luke) "*to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*Most High?*" (Mark, Luke). "*Art Thou come hither before the time to torment us?*" (Matt.). "*I beseech Thee*" (Luke), "*I adjure Thee by God*" (Mark) "*that Thou torment me not*" (Mark, Luke). St. Matthew mentions not the immediate cause of this deprecation, which appears from the other two Evangelists to be our Lord's requiring him to leave the man. "*For He commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man*" (Luke); but

⁴ Quæst. Ev. ii. 13.

⁵ In Luc. vi. 45.

St. Mark still continuing more graphic and particular in his description, as one who had a most lively recollection of the circumstance, "*For He said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man*" (Mark). "What have I to do with Thee?" is the cry of utter desperation; yet that of "I adjure Thee, torment me not," is of exceeding fear. "For," says Jerome, "the very presence of the Saviour is torment to them⁶;" and Chrysostom, "From His presence alone suffering intolerable pain⁷." This cry, made on the command to leave the man, seems to intimate that the coming out of the man was the torment which he feared, or connected with it; as if the only rest for evil spirits was in the possession of men, and in working evil; God having permitted them to come forth upon earth from the place of torment. And they suppose by Christ's coming that it was already the Judgment, not understanding His first coming for salvation. For having apprehended that the Day of Judgment was remote, when they would be delivered up to greater torment and restraint, they ask if Christ is now anticipating that time by His presence in the world; making a confusion between His two comings, as the unbelieving Jews also have done; knowing not of His coming in humiliation as well as in majesty. "What have I to do with Thee?" Apollyon with Jesus, the Destroyer with the Saviour? And thus the guilty conscience, by his instigation, is ever saying to Christ, Leave me alone for a time; torment me not with the troubles of repentance. They "saw Him afar," and hastened to Him, though detected as it were in working evil, such was the constraining power of His presence; as when bad men shall come forth before Him from the tombs, and say in vain

⁶ In Matt. ad loc.

⁷ Hom. in Matt. xxviii.

to the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us, and to the hills, Cover us." St. Chrysostom takes pains to show that these could not be the souls of the departed dwelling in tombs, and possessing as some supposed, other bodies; for the souls of the dead are at once carried or conducted hence, as appears in the case of the beggar Lazarus, and others.

"*And He asked him*" (Mark), "*and Jesus asked him, saying*" (Luke), "*What is thy name?*" (Mark, Luke) "*and he (answered and,*" Mark) "*said, Legion*" (Mark, Luke) "*is my name. For we are many*" (Mark). But St. Luke's account is explanatory, "*Because many devils were entered into him*" (Luke). The legion was about 6000, or 6666 in number, but here it seems used indefinitely for a vast destroying multitude. Some say that Legion is the name of the captain of a legion; but there is no reason thus to take it, one is speaking in the person of all; and the Evangelists proceed to introduce them in the plural as many, and as if with many voices clamourously importuning in great terror; "*And they besought Him*" (Mark, Luke) "*much,*" or with many words, "*that He would not send them away out of the country*" (Mark), "*that He would not command them to depart into the deep*" (Luke). "The everlasting chains under darkness," as St. Jude says, where they are "reserved unto the judgment of the great day."

"*Now there was there*" (Mark, Luke), "*nigh unto the mountains*" (Mark), "*far off from them*" (Matt.), "*an herd of many swine feeding*" (Matt., Luke), "*a great herd of swine feeding*" (Mark) "*on the mountain*" (Luke): "*And the devils*" (Matt.), "*and all the devils*" (Mark) "*besought Him*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*saying*" (Matt., Mark), "*If thou cast us out, suffer us to depart into the*

herd of swine" (Matt.). "Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them" (Mark). "And they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them" (Luke). "Send us," implies their constrained submission; "suffer us to go," their own agency. "And straightway Jesus" (Mark) "permitted them" (Mark, Luke), "and said unto them, Go. And they" (Matt.), "and the devils" (Luke), "and the unclean spirits" (Mark), "went forth" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "from the man" (Luke), "and entered into the (herd of," Matt.) "swine" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "And the herd" (Mark, Luke), "and, behold, the whole herd of swine" (Matt.) "ran violently down a precipice" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "into the sea" (Matt., Mark), "into the lake" (Luke), "they were about two thousand" (Mark), "and were choked" (Mark, Luke) "in the sea" (Mark), "and perished in the waters" (Matt.). A modern writer says he could find no place on that coast so precipitous as here alluded to. But Maundrell mentions the mountain; and it may be observed that it is not stated that they were killed by the precipice, but in the waters. Thus they showed that strange combination of cowardice and ferocity so often found in wicked men; but in Scripture they have none of that grandeur with which some love to invest the evil spirit: inhabiting swine, and converting into swine those made in the image of God; entering into the serpent for cunning; into the swine for uncleanness; although numerous as a legion, yet full of terror at Christ's presence, more terrible to them in the humiliation of His flesh, with the twelve poor Apostles, than if there appeared with Him the "twelve legions of angels," of which He spoke. Even in the emptying of all His glories, "they that be with us are more than they that be with them," though their name be Legion

Their object in entering the swine was not only their destruction, but also to prejudice the owners against Christ; but their evil agency was overruled to a Divine lesson; for the Gentiles were thus taught with the Samaritan woman, that "salvation is of the Jews," for these animals that are destroyed were forbidden to the sacred nation; so that while the miracle manifested the Messiah Himself overcoming the evil spirits, the destruction of the swine taught that this, the Saviour of the world, was the Lawgiver of the Jews. And further, to all the world it showed how great the power of evil spirits, when permitted, on the multitude of the wicked which the swine represented; for as sheep are put in Scripture for the children of God, and goats for evil men who have been in covenant with God; swine are evil men, and out of the covenant. This, moreover, showed the Divine protection and care over themselves, a heathen nation; for it proved, from what the devils did to the swine, and also to the two demoniacs, that unless their power was restrained by Christ, they would have wrought worse evil on all that people, than they did by Divine sufferance on these. It also indicated that the destruction of brute animals was nothing to Christ compared with the salvation of one man; and His particular Providential protection of each, while there exists around us such power and desire of working destruction. With regard to the trifling loss of property to these Gentiles, standing out as it does a solitary instance of destruction in our Lord's miracles, it is scarce worthy of notice in the great work of salvation; but it may be just observed, that the loss of the swine to these Gentiles was not so prejudicial to their worldly interests, as the prohibition to the Jews altogether against keeping them.

Whether a whole nation might be subject to insanity, was a subject of reflection with our great Divine Philosopher. Doubtless thus a whole multitude in revolutions, and whole invading armies, rush onward, by the possession of evil spirits, destroying and destroyed. It is said of Egypt, "He sent evil angels among them."

"*And when they saw what was done*" (Luke), "*they that fed them*" ("*the swine,*" Mark) "*fled (and went,*" Matt., Luke) "*into the city*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*and into the fields*" (Mark, Luke); "*and told all things; and what had happened to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city went out*" (Matt.), "*they went out to behold what was done*" (Mark, Luke), and "*to meet Jesus*" (Matt.). "*And they come to Jesus*" (Mark, Luke), "*and found the man from whom the devils had departed*" (Luke), "*and see him that had been possessed of the devils, that had the legion*" (Mark), "*sitting, clothed, and in his right mind*" (Mark, Luke), "*at the feet of Jesus*" (Luke); "*and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them*" (Mark, Luke) "*how he that had been possessed of the devil had been healed*" (Luke), "*how it had befallen him that was possessed of the devils; and also concerning the swine*" (Mark). It appears in this account that the healing of the demoniac was the great object of their attention; the circumstance of the swine being mentioned to these comers, is only added as it were incidentally, and by one Evangelist only. Whereas it is said, that it was on beholding the man perfectly restored, that they were afraid. Fear often arises from a manifestation of goodness. "There is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared."

"*Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about*" (Luke), they that came out to meet

Jesus, "when they saw Him" (Matt.) "began to beseech Him" (Mark), "besought Him" (Matt., Luke) "to depart" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "out of their coasts" (Matt., Mark), "from them. For they were taken with great fear" (Luke). There is here a difference of opinion with respect to what was the reason of this request. Did it arise from a feeling of unworthiness and reverential awe; such as that of the Centurion, when he said, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof"? or, that of St. Peter, when he exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"? Or was it, on the contrary, as when St. Paul healed the damsel at Philippi, possessed of a spirit of divination, her masters, more affected by their own loss in a gainful trade than by the Divine power displayed, rose up against him with the multitude⁸? It must be allowed that the account of itself appears like rejection; and St. Chrysostom observes upon it, that it was our Lord's custom thus to retire when rejected⁹. And it may be noticed, that on other occasions, indication of Divine power, and even the casting out of evil spirits, is followed by enmity and violence on the part of the Jews; so that the effect of bestowing Divine things on the unworthy, is that they will "turn again and rend you." Still as this is not mentioned, it seems better to ascribe it to the worthier cause, and to suppose that it arose from humility and consciousness of sin; as it is attributed to their fear on beholding the miracle of mercy. And in granting their request, our Lord left them one to preach His wonders more suited to their weakness,—the man himself whom He had delivered.

⁸ Acts xvi. 19.

⁹ Οὐκ ἀντέτεινεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνεχώρησε, καὶ τοὺς ἀναξίους κατέλιπε. And again, Ἄκουτας ἡμᾶς οὐ σωφρονίζει.—Hom. in Matt. xxviii. 4.

“And He entered into the ship, and returned back again. And the man out of whom the devils had departed” (Luke), *“and when He had entered into the ship, he that had been possessed of the devils”* (Mark) *“besought Him that he might be with Him”* (Mark, Luke). *“But Jesus permitted him not”* (Mark). *“But Jesus sent him away”* (Luke), *“saying, Return to thine house”* (Mark, Luke) *“to thy friends, and tell them”* (Mark), *“and relate”* (Luke) *“how great things”* (Mark, Luke) *“the Lord”* (Mark) *“God”* (Luke) *“hath done for thee”* (Mark, Luke), *“and hath had mercy on thee”* (Mark). *“And he departed”* (Mark, Luke); *“and began to preach in Decapolis”* (Mark), *“preaching through the whole city”* (Luke), *“how great things Jesus had done for him”* (Mark, Luke). *“And all marvelled”* (Mark).

By sending him away, and telling him to return home, when he sought His protection, our Lord would have him understand that He was every where present to take care of him; but the command to make known the miracle is a solitary instance, and to be accounted for from the fact of its not being among Jews but Gentiles. St. Augustin takes from it the lesson, that home-obedience, and teaching of others, is to follow on the remission of sins, and not the premature wish of finding rest with Christ¹⁰. And St. Gregory, that when we perceive a little Divine knowledge, we are not to withdraw to the rest of contemplation without first attending to human affairs, and the burdens of our brethren's necessities¹.

“O Lord Jesu Christ, Thou great lover of men, with many tears I entreat Thy goodness to deliver me from all pollutions of sin, and assaults of devils, and to keep me unharmed unto the end; that both by words and

¹⁰ In Quæst. Ev. Lib. ii. 13.

¹ Moral. Cap. vi. 60.

deeds I may show forth how great things Thou hast done for my soul ; so that others perceiving the same may say, This hath God done ; and being stirred by my example, may by Thy mercy be converted to better things²."

SECTION XIX

THE FEAST AT THE HOUSE OF LEVI

"And He entered into the ship, and passed over, and came to His own city" (Matt.), or Capernaum, at which He had now usually resided since His expulsion from Nazareth. *"And when Jesus had passed over in the ship to the other side, a great multitude was gathered together unto Him : and was"* now expecting Him in a great concourse *"by the sea side"* (Mark). Not that our Lord *"was by the sea side,"* as it is rendered in our translation, for that would indicate that He was there when the ruler came, which St. Mark next speaks of ; but that, when He first landed, the multitude were congregated by the sea side to meet Him ; which is more agreeable to the construction, and is in fact but what St. Luke expresses : *"And it came to pass, when Jesus returned, the multitude received Him"* with welcome ; *"for they were all waiting for Him"* (Luke), i. e. on the shore.

St. Mark and St. Luke now proceed to mention the coming of Jairus ; but we know from St. Matthew, that when Jairus came, our Lord was not on the shore, but sitting at meat in the midst of a certain conversation in his own house ; there can be no doubt, therefore, that this feast in his house took place at this time ; thus allowing a

² Vit. Chr. p. 205.

short interval in which Jairus may have heard of His arrival. St. Matthew indeed does now soon introduce that feast, but with the insertion of two circumstances previously intervening; viz. the healing of the paralytic, and his own call; which introduction may be easily accounted for. As he was going to narrate what occurred on our Lord's sitting at meat in his own house, without exactly mentioning himself as the owner of the house, he naturally introduces first of all the mention of his own call, which occurred about a year before, under circumstances so far similar, that our Lord was then passing on the sea shore accompanied with a great concourse of people; and probably his own conversion might have been in some way connected with the cure of the paralytic, which immediately preceded; so that from some such secret connexion known to himself, he takes this opportunity of inserting that also; while the other two Evangelists, after having followed St. Matthew in the previous order, of attaching the feast to his own previous call, here come in to confirm the series of events; rendering the whole narrative clear by an easy adjustment.

"And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house" (Luke). *"And it came to pass that as Jesus sat at meat in the"* (*"his,"* Mark) *"house"* (Matt., Mark). They had both just spoken of Levi, and therefore thus proceed; St. Matthew, speaking of *"the house"* as men naturally do of their own, and in humility not mentioning himself as the host. *"And there was a great company of publicans and of others"* (Luke). *"Many publicans and sinners"* (Matt., Mark) (*"came and,"* Matt.) *"sat down"* (Matt., Mark, Luke) *"with them"* (Luke), *"with Him"* (Matt.), *"with Jesus"* (Mark) *"and His disciples"* (Matt., Mark). *"For there were many, and they followed Him"* (Mark), pressing

closely upon Him, they, together with Him, passed into the house; received there no doubt with much welcome by the owner. The house appears spacious, and the company promiscuous, like a representation of the Gospel feast itself, which has opened its doors to all, and is "filled with guests," "both small and great." Scribes and Pharisees were there, disciples of Christ, and those of the Baptist; and Publicans also, and such as they termed "sinners,"—friends of the lowly Publican, who would earnestly long to bring others to be as himself, so graciously accepted of "the Friend of Publicans and sinners." By the term "sinners," is meant, probably, as in other places, those who were on familiar terms with the Gentiles, and set apart from themselves the "holy nation," "the people of God." As Zaccheus, when Christ deigned to enter his house, "caught wings," as Chrysostom expresses it, with delight, and said in his joy, "Half of my goods I give to the poor;" so Matthew opened his hand and his house freely to all, in bidding his friends adieu, and turning from henceforth to Christ alone.

"*But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*" (Luke)—although spoken apparently against them, yet it was intended against their Lord Himself; and so indeed the others express it. "*And when the Pharisees saw it*" (Matt.), "*and when the Scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners*" (Mark), "*they said unto His disciples*" (Matt., Mark), "*Why eateth your Master*" (Matt.), "*How is it that He eateth and drinketh*" (Mark) "*with publicans and sinners?*" (Matt., Mark)—thus obliquely endeavouring to instil into their minds a distrust of their Lord. It may be observed from several instances, and especially by harmonizing different accounts, that the

complaints of the Pharisees are seldom expressed openly to Christ, but thus obliquely through His disciples, or those of John, sometimes questioning Him in combination with others, and sometimes indicating their ill-will rather by expressive suspicious bearing than by words. The diversity of the accounts is here descriptive and full of meaning: observing which, St. Augustin says, "The sense is all the same, and that sense the better conveyed from certain expressions being varied, while the substantial truth continues the same³."

"*But Jesus answered*" (Luke). "*Now when Jesus heard it, He said unto them*" (Matt., Mark), "*The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). They need Me, the Physician of souls; but ye do not. They are willing to come to Me; and "him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." I sit at meat with them, and they with Me; and so shall it be unto the end: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me⁴." It was our Lord's habit to take persons thus in their own thoughts: Ye Pharisees call them sinners, and consider them as sick; they likewise consider themselves as such, and therefore they need Me, as ye both must allow. Such was His gracious invitation to all.

But we may observe, that when our Lord comes to address the Pharisees more particularly, His allusions are drawn from Scripture; and such St. Matthew alone introduces, either as writing, as some say, to the Hebrews, or perhaps from such observations taking hold particularly of his own mind, as one who coming forth from the Law, and set at nought as a publican, had found rest in the Gospel.

³ De Cons. Evan. ii. 61.

⁴ Rev. iii. 20.

“*But go ye and learn what this is ; I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*” (Matt.)⁶. Ye have yet to go forth from your self-sufficiency, and learn what that meaneth : ye are yourselves the most unworthy to sit at meat in the kingdom, having not on the marriage-garment of charity. Internal sacrifice is better than external : love than the keeping of ordinances. These words, that mercy is better than sacrifice, “*He adds,*” says St. Hilary, “*to warn them that none of them were whole ; that the Law could not save them ; but they needed mercy : for sacrifices being inadequate to salvation, mercy was necessary to all that were under the Law⁶ :*” “*For I am not come to call the righteous ;*” my mission has another object, and is of another character ; “*but to call sinners to repentance*” (Matt., Mark, Luke). So far from setting sinners at nought, they are the very objects of His coming into the world ; for not our merits, but our sins, brought Him from heaven. “*The righteous,*” here spoken of, are not those “*just men*” or “*righteous*” persons whom Scripture sometimes speaks of, as Nathanael, or Zacharias and Elisabeth ; for such Christ came to save ; and such esteeming themselves sinners, and much forgiven, loved much ; but such self-righteous as the Pharisees ; speaking, as St. Chrysostom says, by a kind of irony. Thus His mercy meets their murmurings, inviting sinners to repentance ; for His meat and drink, His walking and His sitting down, and all that He did, are for our salvation, and for our instruction. He is the good Physician, by Whose stripes we are healed ; by Whose humiliations sinners are exalted to sit with Him ; and not that only, for He Himself will “*make them to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them*”⁷.

But these Pharisees were so far from receiving those

⁵ See p. 36.

⁶ In Matt. ad loc.

⁷ Luke xii. 37.

Divine words, that in self-righteousness, without love, they are even at that time instituting comparisons. "*And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast. And they come*" (Mark), "*and they say unto Him, Why do the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees fast*" (Mark, Luke) "*often, and make prayers; but Thine eat and drink?*" (Luke). "*Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft*" (Matt.); "*but Thy disciples fast not?*" (Matt., Mark). It appears in St. Luke that the Pharisees themselves thus speak; from St. Matthew, the disciples of John; from St. Mark, that both of them, or others in their behalf, make the complaint. We must therefore suppose, that the Pharisees now endeavour to instil their ill-will into John's disciples; and that they, together with their own disciples, come forward in consequence with the remark; the disciples of John "come to Him" with the complaint; and the Pharisees, who had instilled it into their minds, join with them in urging the same. And so St. Chrysostom takes it, that the Pharisees come with the disciples of John, as on another occasion with the Herodians. But St. Augustin^s supposes from St. Mark, that the persons who came with the remark were not the disciples of John, nor the Pharisees, but some others who heard their observations. Although St. John the Baptist had himself so strongly condemned these Pharisees as "a generation of vipers," yet they pretend to join his disciples, in order to set them against Christ, as they had done in the former case about purifying. Ye "eat and drink," they say, that is, immoderately, "as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." Thus their very fast was as the Prophet said, "for strife and debate, and to smite with the

^s De Cons. Ev. ii. 62.

fist of wickedness⁹,"—even Him, Whose meat and drink was to do the will of His Father.

"*And He*" (Luke) "*and Jesus*" (Matt., Mark) *said unto them, While the Bridegroom is with them, can (ye make* Luke) "*the children of the bride-chamber*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*mourn*" (Matt.), or "*fast?*" (Mark, Luke). "*As long as they have the Bridegroom with them they cannot fast*" (Mark). "*But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then shall they fast*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*in those days*" (Mark, Luke). Here was tender consideration for the disciples of the Baptist, now in bereavement; for they could not but remember that their master had privately spoken to them of our Lord under this very term of the Bridegroom; thus did He suggest to their remembrance their master's saying, as being the most affectionate appeal that could draw them to Himself, that they might find rest in Him, which their own master, now in prison, so much desired; that, like him, who had described himself as "*the friend of the Bridegroom,*" they might "*rejoice greatly*" in hearing "*the Bridegroom's voice.*" The expression, moreover, was of itself full of mysterious love. "*When Christ wishes to be feared,*" says St. Gregory, "*He calls Himself Lord; when honoured, a Father; when loved, a Bridegroom.*" And the same words, thus calculated to console and invite the disciples of John, conveyed a salutary warning to our Lord's own immediate followers; suggesting to them also, in their exaltation, a time of approaching bereavement; ever restraining any thing that might tend to elate them; and keeping down high imaginations, as well as supporting those that are cast down. And, indeed, in this compassionate and comprehensive appeal, He did not reject

⁹ Isa. lviii. 4.

even the fasting of the Pharisees ; not exposing the hypocrisy of such fasting, but alluding to it as that which would find a place in His own religion hereafter, when love should hallow and direct the same. When the Bridegroom is gone, in those days shall they mourn, with lamps burning and loins girded, through the watches of the night waiting His return, while others “ eat and drink with the drunken ;” but, at present, He answers the Elder Brother : “ It was meet that we should make merry and be glad : for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again : and was lost, and is found.” Or, again, it may be that our Lord’s own words insinuate something of awful prophecy : Ye cannot “ make” the children of the bride-chamber to mourn while the Bridegroom is with them ; but ye will kill the Bridegroom by your unloving religion : and so will ye, indeed, “ make” them to fast and mourn¹⁰. They will, hereafter, fast and mourn in the absence of the Bridegroom, as He said in His last discourse : “ Ye shall weep and lament ; but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful ;” “ but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice ; and your joy no man taketh from you,” as the Pharisees now will do. In the absence of the Bridegroom, Christians must fast and mourn, and in all things that produce the feeling of His absence : “ in much affliction,” “ in hunger and thirst, in fastings often ;” but yet, even now, as far as they feel His presence, they will be “ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing¹.” But, as St. Augustin and Chrysostom both say on this passage, to those renewed by the Spirit even fasting is with joy. In the Bridegroom’s presence they already rejoice ; and He supplies them their means of rejoicing,—the new wine that makes glad the heart².

¹⁰ See Aug. De Con. Ev. ii. 63.

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 10 ; xi. 27.

² See The Nativity, pp. 301—306.

“*And He spake also a parable unto them*” (Luke). “*No man putteth a piece of new cloth*” (Matt., Mark); or, properly, that which is undressed and raw, perhaps unwoven; or, “*No man putteth a piece of a new garment*” (Luke) “*on an old garment*” (Matt., Mark, Luke), “*else that which is put in to fill it up taketh away*” (Matt., Mark) “*from the garment*” (Matt.) “*the new piece from the old*” (Mark), “*and the rent is made worse*” (Matt., Mark). “*The new maketh a rent; and that which is added,*” the piece taken out “*of the new, agreeth not with the old*” (Luke). The new part is too strong for the old, and therefore rends it. The new garment is to be wrought out wholly from the heart within; and it will take the old into itself, and renew and mould it into its own Divine texture, that it may form the marriage-garment, which is the love of Christ; that love which maketh all things new, and never faileth, and fasteth, and mourneth, for the absence of the Bridegroom. Wherefore, all the teaching of Christ was to win the heart: “*My son, give Me thine heart*”³; to this all His conduct was directed; for, without it, all was nothing worth. But this gradual inculcation is expressed afterwards, even to His own disciples: “*I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*”

Of one that could endure greater austerity than himself, Augustin beautifully says, “*Let us love one another; and so it shall be, that I will love thy strength, and thou shalt bear my weakness*”⁴. Surely in such love weakness is strong.

“*Neither do men put new wine into old bottles*” (Matt.). “*And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottles*” (Mark, Luke): the new

³ Prov. xxiii. 26.

⁴ Serm. li. 7, O. T.

wine, by its fermentation, will burst the old leathern vessels or skins: "*else the bottles are broken*" (Matt.), "*and the wine*" ("*it,*" Luke) "*is poured out, and the bottles perish*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*But they put new wine*" (Matt.); "*but the new wine must be put*" (Mark, Luke) "*into new bottles*" (Matt., Mark, Luke); "*and both are preserved*" (Matt., Luke). The old wine is the Law: the new wine is the Blood of Christ, for which the heart must be prepared by His Spirit, as the Jews said in mockery, "These men are full of new wine⁵;" and the old bottles are the natural unregenerate man; of which, dried up by the parching breath of this world, the Psalmist says, "I am become like a bottle in the smoke;" and like the High Priest's robe, and the veil of the Temple, the natural man is burst asunder by the new wine; as in the case of Judas, a literal type of the same. And the wine will be spilled; the Son of God trodden under foot; the blood of the covenant counted an unholy thing; despite done to the Spirit of grace⁶: "For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter⁷."

"Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis, acescit."

HOR.

St. Luke also adds another parable: taking its illustration, like the former, from the things presented to their notice at the feast; and the object of this is to explain how reluctant they who were accustomed to the ceremonial Law would be to receive the Gospel. "*And no one, while drinking old, straightway desireth new wine; for he saith, The old is better*" (Luke).

These characteristics of our Lord's teaching were, perhaps, particularly applicable to St. Matthew's own disposi-

⁵ Acts ii. 13.

⁶ Heb. x. 29.

⁷ Wisdom i. 4.

tion ; and thus in his house and to his guests was explained that wisdom of the Father ; whereby, hiding these things from the wise and prudent, He revealeth them unto babes. St. Chrysostom supposes, that our Lord was in these parables affording rules also to the Apostles for their own teaching : and, certainly, this gradual and tender mode of instruction is much to be observed, not only in them, but in John the Baptist, and all the Divine teachers in Scripture, who, living in great mortification themselves, descend with gentleness and compassion to the infirmities of others. Thus the Baptist does not press on others retirement to the desert ; nor the beloved Disciple a virginal life ; nor St. James his own austerities ; nor St. Paul his own peculiar labours⁸ : but they were made all things to all men, that they "might by all means save some⁹."

SECTION XX

THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER

Thus was the good Physician healing the souls of such as felt their need of a Physician ; and now, by healing their bodies also, did He show these Pharisees His power to do so ; and that even out of their own number, there were those who had only to ask that they might receive of His mercies. "While He was speaking these things unto them" (Matt.), "Behold, there cometh" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "a man, who was" (Luke) "a ruler" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "of the synagogue, whose name was Jairus" (Mark, Luke) ; "and when he saw Him," thus engaged in con-

⁸ See "Plain Sermons," cccxiii.

⁹ 1 Cor. ix. 22.

versation in the midst of the feast, "he fell down at His feet" (Mark), "he fell down at the feet of Jesus" (Luke), which St. Matthew expresses by saying, "and worshipped Him" (Matt.). "And besought Him" (Mark, Luke) "much" (Mark), "that He would come to his house; for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying" (Luke); "saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death" (Mark); "saying, My daughter is even now dead" (Matt.): "but come and lay upon her Thy hand" ("hands, that she may be healed," Mark); "and she shall live" (Matt., Mark). St. Matthew's account being more concise, speaks throughout as if the daughter were already dead; and here he introduces the father, as from the first, thus describing her. St. Augustin¹⁰ supposes, that he had left her dying, and in despair considers her as already dead; and that St. Matthew is mentioning his thoughts rather than his precise words: St. Chrysostom¹, that he only meant to speak strongly of her condition as dying. When a person is given over, and at the last, it is often thus spoken of, although life is not extinct. But the father does not seem yet to despair of life; for the intelligence of her death is afterwards sent him as being such that would alter his conduct; perhaps, therefore, we might explain it by supposing that St. Matthew wished to combine this and the subsequent account briefly in these words, intimating that the father, even when he knew she was dead, still in faith asked for her restoration.

"And Jesus arose," from the couch where He was reclining at table, "and followed him, and so did His disciples" (Matt.). But why, it may be asked, did our Lord leave the company where He was thus engaged? and

¹⁰ De Cons. Ev. ii. 23.

¹ Hom. in Matt. xxxi. 1.

why did He not rather heal the child by His word? He was doing, as He always did, in answering the request made, and no more, which was to lay His "hand upon her," as He had done to Peter's wife's mother at Capernaum, as Naaman expected of Elisha². The example of His going forth was in confirmation of His teaching at the time, as He was telling them of the great value of mercy. He was waiting to answer all, according to their needs, and submitting Himself to the infirmities of a weak faith; and showing, while they accused Him of eating and drinking, that mercy was more to Him than "necessary food³."

"And He went with him, and there followed Him much people, and thronged Him" (Mark). "But as He went the people thronged Him" (Luke). "And behold" (Matt.) "a (certain," Mark) "woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "and had suffered much of many physicians, and" (Mark) "spent all her subsistence" (Mark, Luke) "on physicians; neither could be healed of any" (Luke), "and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; when she had heard of Jesus" (Mark), "she came behind Him (in the crowd," Mark), "and touched (the hem of," Matt., Luke) "His garment" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "For, she said (within herself," Matt.), "If I may but touch His garment I shall be whole" (Matt., Mark). Acknowledging weakness, not despairing of pardon, this is faith: venturing to touch but the hem only, not beyond; not even to His entire vesture, and not to His feet; and not daring to come before Him, but behind! And this she does partly from humility, and partly from the nature of her disease; but, more especially, as St. Chrysostom and others notice, from her being

² 2 Kings v. 11.

³ Job. xxiii. 12.

legally unclean ; yet encouraged to hope from beholding Him come forth with a company of publicans and sinners. And on account of this, her legal uncleanness, St. Jerome observes, she came not to Him in the house, nor in the town, but thus when she sees Him in the way. According to the Law, His garment would have been unclean, if touched by her ; but grace was as extensive as condemnation ; and the garment was full of power, rejecting all uncleanness ; as He touched the leper, and with the touch, what by the Law received pollution, conferred life.

There is a tradition mentioned by Eusebius⁴ and Sozomen¹, that this woman belonged to Cesarea Philippi, and there erected two brazen statues in commemoration of this her cure, representing our Lord, and herself in a suppliant posture ; and that as soon as a certain plant, that grew at the base of His statue, touched the hem of our Lord's garment, it became endued with healing properties. This statue is said to have been overturned by Julian the Apostate. This account would represent this woman as still rich², which St. Chrysostom also supposes : and so far would not be at variance with the mention in St. Ambrose of her being Martha, the sister of Lazarus, were this not for other reasons improbable³.

Ancient writers represent her as a type of the Gentiles ; she is in a state of uncleanness, and set apart from the people of God ; and has been so for "twelve years ;" while the daughter of the ruler, representing the Synagogue, is "twelve years" of age ; the same space of time ; for, when Israel began to live as a people separate to God, the Gentiles began to be given up to idolatry, and to be

⁴ Hist. vii. 14.

¹ Lib. v. 21.

² Hom. in Matt. xxxi. 2.

³ Cor. a Lap. in Marc. and Ludolp. Vit. Chr.

set aside as unclean. To the one our Lord is going: the other comes to Him unasked, approaching behind, as it were, in stealth, and by faith anticipating the blessing; but not till, like the Prodigal son, she had "spent all" that she had. St. Ambrose thus draws the parallel: "In modesty she touched; in faith she came; in piety believed; in wisdom knew herself healed; thus the holy people of the Gentiles blushed at sin, so as to relinquish it; offered faith in believing; showed devotion in asking; put on wisdom in itself feeling its own cure; assumed confidence to confess that it had forestalled what was not its own⁴." In like manner St. Hilary on the same passage says, "The people of the Gentiles hath seized on that which was prepared for Israel." And, we may add, that Israel is stirred to emulation by their faith. To the Jewish nobleman, requesting Christ to "come down and heal his son," He said, "Unless ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe;" and here the sign and wonder is granted by the way, to support the weak faith of the Jewish ruler. "The Jews require a sign:" with the Gentile centurion and the unclean woman there is more faith, because more humility.

"And immediately of her blood" (Mark, Luke) "the fountain was dried up" (Mark), "the issue stopped" (Luke); "and she perceived in her body that she was healed of the plague. And straightway Jesus, knowing in Himself that power had gone forth from Him, turned about in the crowd, and said, Who hath touched My clothes?" (Mark). "And Jesus said, Who hath touched Me? When all were denying, Peter and they that were with him, said" (Luke), "His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest" (Mark), "Master" (Luke), "the people throng Thee" (Mark, Luke)

⁴ Expos. in Luc. vi. 56.

“*and press Thee*” (Luke); “*thrust Thee, and tread on Thee,*” as it is in an old translation: “*and Thou sayest, Who hath touched Me?*” (Mark, Luke). “*But Jesus said, Some one hath touched Me; for I perceive that power hath gone forth from Me*” (Luke).

Thus of Adam did our Lord ask the question concerning that which He well knew beforehand; and of Cain and others: thus of St. Peter He asks, Who He Himself was, till He drew from him that good confession: thus did He lately draw from the evil spirits a declaration of their number: thus afterwards He questioned the father of the maniac boy, how long he had been so afflicted:—all in anticipation of that time, when “*every tongue shall confess to God;*” and “*then shall every man have praise of God.*”

“*And He looked round about Him to see her that had done this thing. But the woman terrified and trembling, knowing what was done in her*” (Mark); “*But the woman when she saw that she was not hid, trembling*” (Luke) “*came, and fell down before Him*” (Mark, Luke), “*and told Him the whole truth*” (Mark); “*declared unto Him before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him; and how she was healed immediately*” (Luke). Thus did our Lord in a manner most impressive, and full of interest, point out to all around Him, that although all may approach and touch Him, yet the will and the faith with which they do so are the conditions of receiving benefit by that approach: thus did He indicate that it was not from want of power that He was now proceeding with Jairus to heal his daughter: thus did He, also, in His marvellous providence, supply to the ruler himself grounds and occasions for strengthening his faith; which he so much needed, and without which, he could not recover his daughter; and it was at the instant when a heavier

trial of faith awaited him on hearing of her death. Other reasons may there also have been for thus signally drawing attention to the woman; to show the miracle to others by her own testimony; to set forth her humble faith; to remove her fears and scrupulous conscience; to show His Divine knowledge, and correct the weakness of her understanding in supposing she could be hidden from Him; though, mainly, to produce in the ruler the faith he needed. "For he was," as St. Chrysostom says, "on the point of thorough unbelief, and so of utter ruin."

"*But Jesus turning about and looking upon her*" (Matt.), "*He said to her*" (Mark, Luke), "*Daughter*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*be of good courage*" (Matt., Luke); "*thy faith hath saved thee*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*Go in peace*" (Mark, Luke), "*and be whole of thy plague*" (Mark). "*And the woman was made whole from that very hour*" (Matt.); that is, His gracious acceptance now confirmed and established the gift. "It was not the hem of His garment," says Chrysostom, "that made her whole, but her frame of mind." "That virtue of His," says St. Hilary, "faith any where attaineth; for, it is every where, and in no place absent⁵." "By faith," says St. Ambrose, "is Christ touched⁶." And St. Augustin in like manner. A power went forth from Christ; yet not as leaving Him void of the same: but as the learning of teachers is communicated to scholars, and has effect in them; so His Divine power is by faith received, and worketh wonders. As to the trembling paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer," in like manner He speaks to her terrified and affrighted; receiving her into the Spirit of adoption, calling her "daughter," as having become by faith a true child of God, though set apart from Israel.

⁵ In Matt. ix. 7.

⁶ In Luc. lib. vi.

Another at this moment much needed such an example ; for, "*While He was yet speaking, from the ruler of the synagogue's*" (Mark, Luke), "*they come, saying*" (Mark), "*there cometh one saying to Him*" (Luke), "*Thy daughter is dead*" (Mark, Luke) ; "*trouble not*" (Luke), "*why troublest thou any further*" (Mark) "*the Master ?*" Hope is at an end, for she is no more. "*But Jesus*" (Mark, Luke), "*when He heard it*" (Luke), "*immediately when He heard that saying, as it was being spoken, He saith to the ruler of the synagogue*" (Mark), "*He answered him, saying*" (Luke), "*Fear not ; only believe*" (Mark, Luke), "*and she shall be made whole*" (Luke). At the very instant, when his foot would have let go its hold, and he would have been overwhelmed in the deep waters of unbelief, Jesus seized him, as it were, and sustained him by His hand, even as He stretched forth His hand to Peter. And yet He delayed until it came to this extremity, and she was dead : thus in the case of Lazarus, there is delay until he is dead : in the storm He slept till they cried to Him : thus is it with the ways of God, He seems ever delaying and exercising our patience. God is slow in His operations, as "men count slackness." The unjust judge, in the parable, waiteth long, and only yieldeth to importunity.

"*And He suffered no one to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James*" (Mark). This mention of taking only these three disciples is thus introduced by St. Mark before coming to the house ; as if this separation from the crowd took place not merely on entering the apartment of the dead, but perhaps on some road verging to the house ; but, in St. Luke, it is on entering the house itself, when He adds to the three the parents also ; which St. Mark likewise then afterwards mentions.

"And when He came into the house He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden" (Luke). "And when Jesus had come to the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels," or flute-players, "and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place" (Matt.). "And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue: and beholdeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly: and entering in He saith unto them, Why make ye this noise and weep?" (Mark). "For all were weeping and bewailing her: but He said, Weep not" (Luke). "The maiden" (Matt., Mark) "she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "knowing that she was dead" (Luke)⁷. The mourners were a proof that her death had taken place: thus in the Prophet, "Call for the mourning women," "let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us," "for death is come up⁸." And the flute was thus used by the heathens,

"Cantabat mœstis tibia funeribus⁹."

and especially at the funerals of the young,

"Tibia cui teneros suetum deducere manes¹⁰."

But why did our Lord here use the expression, that it was not death, but sleep? Not, as some say, in order that before the crowd He might conceal the greatness of the miracle; but, as He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep;" speaking, as in Scripture language, to say that death is not as men think, but only a sleep; of which great truth this raising up is a type and sign; she is at rest, not perished; for,

⁷ See p. 97.

⁹ Ov. Fast.

⁸ Jer. ix. 17—21.

¹⁰ Stat. Thebaid. vi.

such is death with God. "With Him," says St. Hilary, "her death was but a sleep"¹. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for, all live to Him. When He is near, death is but a sleep. "Where faith of resurrection is," says St. Ambrose, "it has not the character of death, but of sleep"¹. Therefore, He put aside the mourners, teaching us, that we mourn not "as others, which have no hope," for they but "sleep in Christ," and God shall bring them with Him. "But do not thou," says Chrysostom, "go out with the minstrels, but remain with Peter, and John, and James."

"*But when He had put them all out*" (Mark, Luke), "*and when the multitude was put out, He entered in*" (Matt.), "*and taketh with Him the father of the maiden and the mother, and those that were with Him,*"—the three whom it was before mentioned He had brought with Him to the house,—"*and goeth in where the child was lying*" (Mark). He put out the multitude, "for they were not worthy," says St. Jerome, "to behold the mystery of the resurrection, who mocked Him that made her to rise." "The few," says Hilary, "that were admitted to behold it were a sign of the small number of the elect." It was, as He Himself, on rising from the dead, manifested Himself only to a few. But He chose these few, in order that, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word might be established;" if the disciples be taken as witnesses, they are three; if the parents, they are two; or, if the daughter risen be added to them, they also are three; setting forth, as on every great occasion, the mystery of the Trinity, and of Christ risen.

"*And He took hold of her hand*" (Matt., Mark, Luke),

¹ In Matt. ix. 8.

¹ In Luc. vi. 62.

"of the maiden's hand"², according to the very words of the request her father had made; "and saith unto her" (Mark), "and called, saying, Maid, arise" (Luke), "*Talitha Kumi, which is, being interpreted, Maid, I say unto thee, Arise*" (Mark). He called aloud, as on the raising of Lazarus, and the widow's son, with that voice that shall hereafter raise the dead. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up"³. "And her spirit returned" (Luke), "and immediately" (Mark, Luke) "the maid" (Matt., Mark) "arose" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "and walked: for she was twelve years of age" (Mark). "And He commanded that something should be given her to eat" (Mark, Luke); "and they" ("her parents," Luke) "were amazed" (Mark, Luke) "with a great amazement. And He charged them much that no man should know it" (Mark); "And He charged them to tell no man what was done" (Luke). Yet, notwithstanding this charge, as had been the case in the healing of the leper, and the blind men afterwards, it is added: "And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land" (Matt.). He commanded them to give her meat, as Lazarus, when risen, sat at meat with Him, as He Himself ate and drank with His disciples after His resurrection; giving the proof of His risen Body, "to certain witnesses chosen before of God." And not only life, but strength also was restored; for "she walked."

But to apply it to the restoration of the soul⁴, which has just become dead by mortal sin; first of all, they that mock in unbelief, and the minstrels, evil companions, which would charm and delude the soul, must be put

² See pp. 99, 100.

³ 1 Sam. ii. 6.

⁴ See pp. 102-105.

away : in solitude, with a few chosen of God, is it to be raised up ; and then, to walk in the way of God's commandments, and be restored to the participation of Christ's Body and Blood, as by His command, "Arise and eat." "Blessed is he," says St. Ambrose, "whom Wisdom takes by the hand ! May she, who is the Word of God, take me also by the hand, turn away the spirit of error, and command meat to be given me, which is the Heavenly Bread, the Word of God. Wisdom is she, that hath filled the holy altars with the food of the Body and Blood Divine ; and says, 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled ⁵.'"

SECTION XXI

TWO BLIND MEN HEALED ; AND A DUMB SPIRIT CAST OUT

"And when Jesus was departing from thence, there followed Him two blind men, crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, Son of David. And when He had entered the house, the blind men came to Him ; and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this ? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus earnestly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they had gone forth, spread abroad the report of Him in all that country" (Matt.).

St. Matthew likewise mentions two blind men as appealing to our Lord in the same words about a year

⁵ Prov. ix. 5.

later on His last going through Jericho ; and there also their healing is attributed to their faith. But there is this difference on the two occasions, that in the other the healing takes place before the multitude, but this is in a house. St. Augustin observes on this, "that many actions of our Lord are much like one another ; but proved not to be the same, by being both related at different times by the same Evangelist ; so that this ought to serve as a reason, when we find cases in which one is recorded by one Evangelist, and another by another, and a difference which we cannot reconcile between them, that we should suppose them as similar, but not the same event⁶." Perhaps the appeal to Christ, as the Son of David, made by the blind men in both instances, may be owing to this : that when they heard of Him they recognized Him as the Messiah, of whom it was especially said, that He should open the eyes of the blind ; while those, who themselves witnessed His mighty works, were not so much inclined to recur to the fulfilment of prophecy, from their thoughts being more occupied in astonishment at the visible manifestation of a Divine power. The expression is also used by the woman of Canaan. It also renders it the more striking that even the blind, who could not see Him, yet could recognize the promised Messiah ; while the unbelieving Jews, even in beholding, could not see Him. Our Lord's asking them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" was not only requiring that confession with the mouth, which is necessary to salvation, as well as believing in the heart ; but also the fuller establishment and elevation of their faith ; for they had as yet only confessed Him as the Son of David ; they had expressed no exact belief in His Godhead, as able to

⁶ De Con. Ev. ii. 29.

do this of Himself. For this it was, which the Jews—whose case seems to have been mystically represented by the blind men—at this time needed, in order that their eyes might be opened; our Lord's last question to them in the Temple was in order to teach them that the Son of David was more than man. But with regard to the circumstance of these blind men being taken apart to be healed in the house, while the other two at Jericho were healed in the presence of the multitude, the difference may be owing to this: that when our Lord's ministry was drawing to a close, He concealed His miracles less than He had done; as in the raising of Lazarus, about the same time in which those blind men at Jericho were healed, which may be contrasted with this raising of the ruler's daughter, and the case of these blind men in the house; both of them with the earnest charge of concealment. The fact of their publication, against this strict injunction of secrecy, St. Gregory⁷ applies to the conduct of Christians, who, while in humility, they wish and endeavour to hide their good deeds; yet, notwithstanding, they become known, to the example and benefit of others. Thus while they do all things as unto God in secret, yet their light shines before men, so that they glorify their Father, which is in heaven.

“And when they were gone out, Behold, they brought unto Him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out the dumb spake, and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees,” still unrepenting and unmoved by reproof, *“said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils”* (Matt.)⁸. Thus is it, St. Jerome observes, unto this day, while the marvel of the multitude is set forth by

⁷ Mor. xix. 23.

⁸ See Pt. ii. § i.

the belief of the Gentiles, the scoff of the Pharisees is still carried on in the unbelieving Jews. Their expression, "that it was never so seen in Israel," seems to indicate, that when on a former occasion our Lord said to them, "By whom do your sons cast them out?" He did not imply that such miracles of exorcism were ever really performed by them. Thus in the two successive miracles the Evangelist takes the place of the Prophet, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped;" "and the tongue of the dumb shall sing⁹:" thus, also, is it now mystically fulfilled in the restoration of the soul, when the eyes are opened by Christ, and behold in Him the true light; the tongue also is loosed to speak His praise, which Satan before had bound. "The evil spirit is first cast out," says St. Hilary, "and then the bodily functions succeed;" so it was, he observes, in the conversion of the nations¹⁰.

"O Thou, the true Light of eternal brightness, illuminate mine eyes within, that I sleep not in the death of the soul; that, enlightened by Thee, I may be able to see what things I ought to do; and, aided by Thy grace, may perform the same. Open also my mouth, O Lord, by the inspiration of Thy Spirit; set me free from the bonds of sin, and loose my tongue to speak Thy marvellous acts¹."

⁹ *Is.* xxxv 5.

¹⁰ in *Matt.* ix. 10.

¹ *Vit. Chr.*

SECTION XXII

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

It is now a year and a half, or nearly two years, since we read of our Lord's being at His own village of Nazareth; the spot, we may well suppose, of His peculiar interest and affection. The last occasion was on the first commencement of His ministry in Galilee, when He opened the Prophet Isaiah in the Synagogue, teaching them that the Great year of the Atonement was come; and afterwards escaped, as it were, by miracle from their hands². And now, when Gentiles had received Him, and multitudes from every part were flocking to Him, He again makes a trial of His maternal village: still bearing with them, out of tenderness and compassion, not mindful of their unkindness, nor revenging it, but acting up to His own command of doing good to those who despitefully use and persecute us.

“And He went out from thence, and came unto His own country; and His disciples follow Him. And when the Sabbath day was come He began to teach” (Mark); *“and when He had come into His own country He taught them”* (Matt.) *“in their synagogue”* (Matt., Mark); *“insomuch, that they were astonished”* (Matt.), *“and many hearing Him were astonished”* (Mark), *“and said, From whence hath this man”* (Matt., Mark) *“this wisdom? and these mighty works”* (Matt.), *“these things? And what is this wisdom which is given Him, that such mighty works are wrought by His hands? Is not this the carpenter? (Mark);*

² See The Nativity, P. iii. § vii.

"*is not this the carpenter's son?*" (Matt.). What wisdom and what works, as He was described by the disciples, "a Prophet mighty in deed and word."

What wisdom, for He was the Very Wisdom of the Father, "full of grace are Thy lips." And what mighty works, for "the heavens are the works of Thine hands." Full of hidden mystery were their words of reproach: "The Artificer," "the Son of the Artificer!"—yea, the very Creator, "One with the Father!" For, "such as the Father is, such is the Son;" "all things were made by Him: and without Him was not any thing made that was made." And even now, in His humiliation, a mightier work His hands were fashioning, even "new heavens and a new earth." "Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength, because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. For I will consider Thy heavens, even the works of Thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained. What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" In the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth, let us study to understand this Psalm.

"*Is not His mother called Mary? And His brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Jude?*" (Matt.). Is it not "*the son of Mary? the brother of James, and Joses, and Jude, and Simon?*" And are not" (Mark) "*His sisters all*" (Matt., "*here,*" Mark) "*with us?*" (Matt., Mark). "Are they not all here with us?" seems to be spoken of the sisters, and of our Lord's mother. Joseph appears to have been dead at this time. "*From whence, then, hath this man all these things?*" (Matt.). "*And they were offended in Him;*" offended already at the stumbling-

³ See p. 173.

block of the cross. "*But Jesus said unto them, A Prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house*" (Matt., Mark), "*and among his kindred*" (Mark). Thus in type Joseph and Moses; thus Elijah and Elisha were, more or less, set at nought by their own house, or kindred, or countrymen, and honoured by strangers. Thus Isaiah sawn in sunder, Jeremiah imprisoned, Ezekiel mocked by their own nation; Daniel had in honour of heathen kings. Thus David despised as the son of Jesse; Amos as the herdsman, and son of a herdsman. St. Chrysostom supposes the term, "in his own house," to be spoken "with a covert reference to His very own brethren." And we read in St. John, "neither did His brethren believe in Him." In senses so manifold and deep were the Psalmist's words fulfilled, "I am become a stranger unto My brethren, even an alien unto My mother's children⁴."

"*And He did not there many mighty works because of their unbelief*" (Matt.). "*And He could not do there any mighty work, save that He laid His hands on a few sick folk and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief*" (Mark). At two things Christ is said to have marvelled, at the faith of the Gentile Centurion, and at the unbelief of His own countrymen. "He could do no mighty work," not for want of power in Himself, but of meetness to receive in them; so was His Omnipotence bound as it were by the bands of our unworthiness. Thus Herod wished to see some miracle done by Him, but could not; thus the Pharisees to see some sign, but had it not; while to faith He gives to partake of His own marvellous power.

⁴ See The Nativity, pp. 370—372.

PART III

The Twelve sent Forth

“A little one shall become a thousand.”

SECTION I

APOSTLES INSTRUCTED FOR THEIR MISSION

AFTER the last-mentioned visit to Nazareth, St. Mark adds, “*And He went round about the villages teaching;*” and his words seem to be a short recapitulation of St. Matthew’s statement at this time, after the last-recorded miracle; “*And Jesus went round about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease, and every sickness among the people.*” It is after our Lord had been thus traversing Galilee, and visiting every place, that the Evangelist thus proceeds: “*But when He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of*

the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt.). It is remarkable that the very same expressions occur on sending out the Seventy, subsequently in St. Luke, as well as some of the charges then given. St. Augustin says, that where the Apostles are the reapers, as in this place, it has reference to the Jews; when sowers, to the Gentiles¹. But this is not altogether the case, for the coming of the Samaritans in St. John, is spoken of as a harvest of which they were the reapers. The Sower, in the parable, has now for two years been sowing His seed, and already the harvest is plenteous, and needs many to tend it. And it is evident from this, that if prayer be made, efficient Ministers will be sent; and if they are not sent, it is a proof that prayer has not been made. In the circumstances last-mentioned at Nazareth, we find faith the indispensable requisite, without which miracles could not be wrought: and now the prayer of faith is in like manner needful that physicians of the soul may go forth; by prayer and faith do they come to that Rock which is the Godhead of Christ. "He had compassion on them," waiting to be gracious, but is listening for prayer. "The Lord had compassion on them," says St. Hilary, "as seeing them vexed with the violence of the unclean spirit, and sick with the burden of the law; having no shepherd to restore them to the keeping of the Holy Spirit. Of that gift there was plenteous fruit, but none as yet to reap. Its abundance exceeded the multitude of them that drank thereof. For how much soever be thence taken by all, inexhaustible the supply that still remains²."

"And He calleth unto Him the twelve" (Mark); *"and*

¹ Serm. li. O. T.

² In Matt. x. 2.

when He had called (together," Luke) "unto Him His twelve disciples" (Matt., Luke), "He gave them authority" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "and power over all devils" (Luke), "over unclean spirits" (Matt., Mark), "to cast them out" (Matt., Luke), "and to heal" (Matt., Luke) "diseases" (Luke), "every disease and every infirmity" (Matt.). "And He began to send them forth" (Mark); "and He sent them to preach the kingdom and to heal the sick" (Luke); "by two and two" (Mark). He sent them by two and two, to heal body and soul; to preach His Godhead and His Manhood;—or the two great laws of charity;—or the two Testaments; or that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word might be established; or that where two or three are together in His name, He might be in the midst of them; or to bring in unto God the spiritual Israel, for the number two ever waiteth for a third³.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles," as in the Old Testament "the way of Assyria," "the way of Egypt," "and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt.). The time of their being sent forth was, as St. Chrysostom says, "When they had now witnessed the raising of the dead, the sea rebuked, and other like wonders." The works they had to perform, were those of mercy bodily or spiritual; the persons sent forth were those who had faith to witness and to partake in those wonders; those to whom they were sent were the lost sheep of Israel;

³ See The Holy Week, p. 32.

the object of their preaching was the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, not brought nigh by any movement of the visible elements, but by faith in the unseen ; by which men are again formed in the image of God, which they had lost in Adam ; for these His Apostles now go forth, as St. Hilary says, "being fashioned again in the image and likeness of God." They are the prophets in the regeneration, "Of the twelve prophets let the memorial be blessed, and let their bones flourish again out of their place, for they comforted Jacob⁴." The Church goes forth in the power of the twelve Apostles, replete with their Master's light, the Sun of Righteousness. "Are there not twelve hours in the day ? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not." So is it in the doctrine and fellowship of the Twelve. In the Apostolic Church there is light ; He sends them forth imbued with His doctrine and His power. "Preach the kingdom, and heal the sick ;" thus did our Lord always combine works of mercy with the teaching of His Gospel ; in His own ministry, and in sending forth the Twelve, and also the Seventy ; uniting truth and mercy in an indissoluble bond of God, that man may not put asunder ; care of men's bodies, with the saving of their souls ; light and love combined ; the light which is without love is a counterfeit ; the manifestation of the Spirit is in power and love. He sends them first to the people of Israel as the children of the kingdom ; and that they might not be provoked to envy by any preference of the Gentiles, and to show His forgiveness for their malice, by the term "lost sheep" expressing His tender compassion for them. "Freely give," as in great abundance and without grudging, fulfilling the invitation of the prophet, "without money

⁴ *Ecclus.* xlix. 10.

and without price ;” as receiving nothing again, “ as poor, yet making many rich.” Or as St. Chrysostom says with respect to the Apostles themselves, “ freely ye have received,” repressing pride ; “ freely give,” repressing covetousness.

“ *And He commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey*” (Mark). “ *And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey*” (Luke). “ *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses*” (Matt.), i. e. no money of any kind, “ *no money in their purse*” (Mark), “ *no scrip*” (Matt., Mark, Luke), or bag to carry provisions, “ *for your journey*” (Matt.), “ *nor bread*” (Mark, Luke) ; “ *neither have two coats*” (Matt., Luke), “ *apiece*” (Luke), “ *and not put on two coats*” (Mark), “ *neither shoes*” (Matt.), “ *but be shod with sandals*” (Mark), “ *nor yet staves*” (Matt., Luke), “ *save a staff only*” (Mark). “ *For the workman is worthy of his meat*” (Matt.). “ No scrip for the journey,”—“ that is,” says Hilary, “ we are to relinquish all care of worldly substance ; for all treasure upon earth is injurious, since the heart will be there where the treasure is⁵.” The “ two coats” implies of course no change of raiment, nothing more than is needful ; as the Baptist, “ He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none.” But St. Matthew says, “ neither shoes ;” whereas St. Mark has it, “ be shod with sandals,” and the expression “ shod,” in the Greek, as well as in the place where it occurs in the Acts, when the Angel says to St. Peter, “ bind on thy sandals⁶,” seems to imply shoes. Some would understand the “ sandal” as the more ordinary substitute for the shoe, the shoe being something more than the sandal, and used by the rich. The difficulty is greater to reconcile St. Matthew and St. Luke with St.

⁵ In Matt. ad loc.

⁶ ὑπόδησαι γὰρ σανδάλια. Acts xii. 8.

Mark, where the two former say, "no staves;" but the latter a "staff only." St. Chrysostom supposes that the "without shoes or staves," as each of these occur in the other Evangelists, is the injunction of perfection; the staff and sandals in St. Mark by permission. Perhaps, indeed, the slight discrepancies found in these places may be owing to this circumstance, that as they were sent forth "by two and two," the injunctions may have been repeated by our Lord with some degree of variation. The "staff only," as permitted in St. Mark, seems to express nothing but the ordinary companion of a destitute person, as Jacob says "With my staff I passed over this Jordan," i. e. in utter need of all things. But "the staff," in St. Mark, is very generally interpreted in a mystical sense, and so not at all to vary in intent from the other Evangelists, as if it were said, take nothing but the pastoral staff, the insignia of office; go forth, having nothing but your apostolic authority, the rod committed to your charge by Christ; as St. Paul speaks of the "rod" of his authority, as an Apostle of Christ. And in this sense they might use the Psalmist's expression in his goings through the valley of the shadow of death, "Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me;" I have no trust in any thing but in Thy mission and Thy charge committed to me. And we find this emblem thus literally used with power, as in the rod of Moses, and the staff of Elisha. "Not to carry a staff," says St. Jerome, "which may be turned into a serpent;" "not to seek rights of extraneous power," says Hilary, "having the rod from the root of Jesse⁸." St. Augustin thus supposes that "these things were spoken by our Lord partly in a direct, partly in a figurative sense; that one of the Evangelists inserted some things, and the other

⁷ Gen. xxxii. 10.

⁸ In Matt. ad loc.

other things, in his narrative⁹." And he proceeds to show that our Lord did, on other occasions, at the same time, speak partly in a direct, and partly in a mystical sense. And, indeed, such is the case throughout the Scriptures.

Thus are they now to be miraculously sustained for the exercise of their faith; in distinction from which, our Lord says to them when about to be taken from them, "But now he that hath a sword let him take it, and likewise his scrip." Although this charge is not of universal application, yet the principle contained in it is not to be straitened; that voluntary poverty gives efficacy to the preaching of Christ crucified; that the especial danger of ministers is avarice, in them that would make a "gain of godliness," through covetousness making merchandise of men's souls; as set forth in Balaam, in Gehazi, in the Pharisees, in Judas. This is the caution given to Moses in selecting the Seventy: "Thou shalt provide able men, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them¹." But this of our Lord's was a supernatural training of them to this spirit of faith, "as an eagle fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings²." As the children of Israel had been thus miraculously provided for in the desert³; as the healing of diseases in the first establishing of His Church, taught men in sickness to trust in God throughout, in the course of His kingdom.

"But into whatsoever city and village ye enter, inquire who in it is worthy" (Matt.), "and He said unto them" (Mark), "Wheresoever ye enter into an house" (Mark, Luke), "there remain until ye depart thence" (Matt., Mark,

⁹ De Con. lib. ii. 30.

¹ Exod. xviii. 21.

² Deut. xxxii. 11.

³ Neh. ix. 21.

Luke); *“and when ye enter into the house, salute it, declaring peace; and if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you”* (Matt.). *“And whosoever shall not receive you”* (Matt., Mark, Luke), *“nor hear you”* (Mark), *“nor hear your words”* (Matt.), *“when ye depart thence”* (Mark), *“departing from that (house or,”* Matt.) *“city”* (Matt., Luke), *“shake off the dust of”* (or *“from under,”* Mark) *“your feet”* (Matt., Mark, Luke), *“for a testimony against them”* (Mark, Luke). *“Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for (the land of,”* Matt.) *“Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city”* (Matt., Mark).

Having said that the workman is worthy of his meat, to show, as St. Jerome explains it, that the favour is rather given than received, He adds this need of circumspection in choosing their host; and also in order that they might not be casting pearls before those unmeet to receive them; and by not passing “from house to house” might rather excite a desire to seek them, than thrust themselves on the unworthy. Thus St. Paul would not be supported by all the churches he had founded, but by the Philippians only, as worthy of that privilege: thus our Lord rejected some that asked, invited others, according to their worthiness: thus He Himself also was ministered unto by holy women, not that He needed any thing, but for their sakes, as fruit that might abound to their account. Christ was to be in them, therefore their mission was to resemble His; like Him, they were both to work miracles and to preach; like Him, Who had not where to lay His head, they were to go forth unprovided; like Him, they were to choose those that were worthy; to be ministered unto like Him by others; like Him, to

declare peace, as when He appeared unto them after the resurrection : and the rejection of them is like the rejection of our Lord Himself ; for, in both cases alike, He declared, that it would be more heavily visited than on Sodom and Gomorrha.

Many of the expressions are similar in sending forth the Seventy, and, in some degree, explanatory. St. Matthew here says, " Salute that house ;" but St. Luke, in the instruction to the Seventy, mentions the terms of salutation, " say, Peace be to this house ;" and to this expression the words that here follow in St. Matthew allude, " if it be worthy, your peace shall come upon it : " and, instead of " if it be worthy," it is in St. Luke, " if the son of peace be there." Again, it is here " in whatever house ye enter there remain : " in the other, " Go not from house to house ⁴." " Your peace shall return to you again," may either signify it shall not be without recompense, as the Psalmist says, " My prayer shall return into mine own bosom ;" or, it may be, it shall be ineffectual for that purpose, as in the expression in Isaiah, " My word shall not return unto Me void ⁵." Augustin explains it as comprehending both senses : " Thou hast not lost thy reward, because he hath remained empty ⁶." Of the command, " cast the dust from your feet," St. Hilary says, " For he that abides in any place, seems to have a kind of fellowship with that place. Therefore, all the sin of that house is left behind by the casting the dust off the feet, and nothing of holiness is derived from the footsteps of the Apostles that have trod therein ⁷." In like manner Chrysostom and Augustin. " Or, it is a token," says St. Jerome, " that they would receive nothing from them."

⁴ Luke x. 5—7.

⁶ Isa. lv. 11.

⁶ Serm. li. 11. O. T.

⁷ In Matt. x. 10.

Perhaps it may be, as Origen explains it, a solemn act of abjuration and appeal to the judgment. The expression, "for a testimony against them," seems to have this force. Such significative actions were usual among the Jews, as in Jacob's heaping of stones for a witness, and in Pilate's washing his hands, and the high-priest rending his garment⁸.

SECTION II

FURTHER INSTRUCTION OF APOSTLES

AND now we have the account continued in St. Matthew only; but nearly all the expressions in the present discourse are to be found elsewhere; either in the conversation lately given in St. Luke's Gospel, or on the sending forth of the Seventy, or in the last discourses respecting the end of the world: but many of these sayings derive a new light from the other places in which they occur; sometimes being applied with a new context; sometimes being evidently used with some variety of meaning; sometimes the same expressions are found in a different order with respect to each other. The repetition of the same things by our Lord on different occasions may be owing to the importance of them; in St. Paul's words, to say "the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe⁹."

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as the serpents, and harmless as the doves." "Behold, I send you!" "This is their authority," says Chrysostom; "this their prerogative;

⁸ See Maldon. in Matt. ad loc.

⁹ Phil. iii. 1.

this their invincible strength¹⁰." Not unto wolves, but "in the midst of wolves," because from every quarter the world will combine against the good. And since I send you forth thus unarmed, amidst armed foes, you must take care of yourselves with serpent wisdom; but your great strength will be in your innocence: while ye keep this, nothing can harm you. "While we are as the sheep, we shall overcome," says St. Chrysostom, "though surrounded by a thousand wolves; but, if we become as wolves, we shall be overcome; for the aid of the Shepherd is then away." "My grace is sufficient for thee," "My strength is perfected in weakness." It is said, by the last-mentioned writer, and St. Jerome, that the serpent cares for nothing, but will allow even its body to be cut off, as long as it may save its head: this is to be the wisdom of Christians, being ready to sacrifice all things to keep their faith. But St. Hilary alludes to the sacred mention of the serpent, which, "before it had deceived Adam, was in Genesis pronounced wise; and this subtlety it showed in the method of its evil design; first assailing the mind of the softer sex; then alluring with hope and assurances of immortality, and through such great rewards carrying on his work of evil. With like opportunity and insight into the character and will of each must wisdom of speech be used; hope of future blessings be revealed; and by bringing forth heavenly rewards, we may of truth preach what he said in lies;—that, according to God's own promise, they who believe shall be as angels¹."

"*But take heed of men.*" "He did not commit Himself unto them," says St. John of Christ, "because He knew what was in man:" "*for they will deliver you up unto councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge*

¹⁰ In Matt. Hom. xxxiii. 3.

¹ In Matt. x. 13.

you: and ye shall be brought unto governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony unto them and unto the Gentiles².” All this “for My sake,” and “for a testimony,”—this is glory and gain enough to cover all. “Fear not; I am Thy exceeding great reward.” “*And when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you³.*” Thus St. Paul: “Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me⁴.” “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord⁵.” Take no forethought, going forth, like Abraham, to the holy mountain of sacrifice, the Jehovah-jireh, where “God will provide.” “*And brother shall betray brother unto death, and father the child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to die. And ye shall be hated of all on account of My Name⁶.*” For the recollection of Christ takes the sting out of every evil. “*But he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved⁷.*” “Unto the end” will there be need of perseverance; therefore, unto the end will there be suffering and trial. “*But when they pursue you in this city, flee unto another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have completed the cities of Israel until the Son of Man shall have come,*” in His spiritual kingdom on the destruction of Jerusalem. “*A disciple is not above the Master, nor servant above his Lord. Sufficient for the disciple that he become as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If the Master of the house they have called Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?*”

² See The Holy Week, pp. 255—258.

⁴ 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

⁶ See The Holy Week, pp. 259—261.

³ See p. 191.

⁵ Prov. xvi. 1.

⁷ Ibid. p. 262.

For the miracles of the Apostles they attributed to Satan, and the power of the sacraments to the influence of magic. In the early ages of the Church, and unto this day, whoever would resemble Christ in his life, shall obtain the same treatment and obloquy from the world. "*Fear them not therefore ; for there is nothing covered that shall not be disclosed ; nor hid that shall not be known*." In the passage in St. Luke, the expression, "fear them not therefore," comes after the assurances of God's fatherly protection, which are here given afterwards. "*What I say unto you in the dark, speak ye in the light ; and that which ye hear in the ear, proclaim ye on the house-tops.*" It is taken in a threefold sense. What ye have heard in mystery, proclaim openly ; what ye have heard in secret, speak in public ; what ye have heard in the obscure corner of Judea, manifest to the whole world : it is, moreover, an ethical law, that strength is gained in secret before it comes forth to the world. "*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but fear ye rather Him, Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. But with you the hairs of the head are all numbered*." *Fear not therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows.*" These words, "fear not," are here repeated by our Blessed Lord three times ; being, as it were, the key note of the whole discourse, as the Evangelical Prophet had said, "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself ; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." And in like manner it is added, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord

⁸ See pp. 186, 187.

⁹ See pp. 188—190. See *The Holy Week*, p. 261.

hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel¹." It is not merely that natural Providence, which watches over all His creatures; but great, moreover, and peculiar is the care He has for all that concerns His elect. "*Every one therefore that shall confess in Me before men, I shall in him confess before My Father in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, I shall deny him before My Father in heaven*²." In all these things Christ is with them; He in them, and they in Him; and their part is combined with His; to do miracles is His; to go forth unprovided is theirs; to open men's houses to them is His; to require no more than what is needful is theirs; to bestow the peace of God was His; to inquire for them that are worthy was theirs; to punish such as received them not was His; but theirs to retire from them with meekness: to afford the Spirit was His; to become like sheep and doves was theirs; to be hated, and yet to endure, was theirs; to save those that endure was His³.

"*Think not that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.*" He had just commissioned them to declare "peace" unto the house into which they entered; and yet, here the entrance of Christ into a house is to be not peace, but war; thus every pearl of the Gospel is to be found in the midst of its opposites. And woe is pronounced on those who declare peace, where there is no peace. "*For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother: and they of his own household shall be a man's enemies*⁴." In this place, the cause of these divisions is added, but not in St. Luke, viz. the greater love of Christ. "*He that loveth father or mother more*

¹ Isa. viii. 13—18.

² See p. 190.

³ Chrys. Hom. in Matt. sxxiii.

⁴ See pp. 209, 210.

than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me^b." A man's conduct does not depend on the positive strength of any passions or affections; but on their relative strength with regard to each other; however strong other inclinations may be, the strongest takes the lead in action, becomes the ruling passion and guide of life; and this must be the love of Christ, or all will be wrong; for a man cannot love these relatives too much, if such be subordinate to a higher love. But to sacrifice natural affection where it interferes is painful to the flesh, and therefore it is added: "*And whosoever taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me. He that hath found his life,*"—hath attained that which is to his mind;—hath found rest to his soul, such as it desires in this life;—"he shall lose it. And he that hath lost his life for My sake," having made sacrifice of that which is most dear to him in this world, "*he shall find it.*"—an expression which is recorded on four distinct occasions. And what it is to act up to these things, St. Paul bears witness, saying, "I live no more, but Christ liveth in me." "My God is my life," says Quesnel; "I die only when I lose Him." "Behold here a paradox," says another, "life is situate in death, and death in life; for, if for Christ thou diest, thou shalt live; but if thou deniest Christ, in order that thou mightest live, thou shalt die for ever^c."

And now in the more immediate application of all this to the sending forth of the Apostles. "*He that receiveth you receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me:*"—an expression often used on different occasions, and also with some variation,

^b See Deut. xiii. 6. 8.

^c Cor. a Lap. in loc.

as, "He that heareth you heareth Me⁷;" and "He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me⁸." "*He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward.*" In the name of a prophet, i. e. from no worldly consideration, but as a prophet of God; as did the widow of Sarepta, and Obadiah, and the Shunammite. Thus St. Ignatius to the Church of Smyrna: "For, he that honoureth one bound for Christ's sake, shall receive the reward of martyrs." And the same was set forth in the Old Testament: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff⁹." "Whereby," says Hilary, "God bestows many occasions of obtaining eternity." "*And he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, Verily, I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward*" (Matt.). Wonderful mysteriousness of retribution! The certainty of certainties sealed by the expression, "Verily," for an act so small. In the other passage, where this last verse occurs, our Lord had been taking a little child and setting him before the disciples, which gives a peculiar force and beauty to this expression of "little ones," here applied to those disciples: and in another place, "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My Name receiveth Me¹⁰." Thus St. Paul: "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead:" and to the Galatians: "My temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." But St. Hilary supposes, that not the

⁷ Luke x. 16.

⁸ John xii. 45.

⁹ 1 Sam. xxx. 24.

¹⁰ Matt. xviii. 5. Luke ix. 48.

infirmities only, but even the infidelity of those who should be in the Apostle's place is here provided for that "the work of a good conscience shall not be in vain, nor the hope of faith suffer from the infidelity of others: foreseeing, that many would be glorious in the name only of Apostleship, while in all the work of their lives they were not to be approved of; yet that dutiful service done to them under the opinion of religion, shall not be defrauded of its reward; for, though they be the least, i. e. the last of all sinners, yet that duties, ever so trivial, performed to them, shall not be in vain¹." So minute is His care, that every hair of the head is numbered; so minute His retribution, that a cup of cold water is not forgotten: so fearfully and wonderfully are we made.

"And it came to pass, that when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and preach in their cities" (Matt.). "And they departed" (Mark, Luke), "and went through the vil- lages, preaching the Gospel, and healing everywhere" (Luke). "They preached that men should repent, and cast out many devils; and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark). "That men should repent," this was the preaching of the prophets, of the holy Baptist, of our Lord Himself, of His Apostles; the same extending in fuller and louder cry as the kingdom approaches.

It is remarkable that this instance, in St. Mark, is the only mention of the use of oil in the Gospels. The application could not have been medicinal, for their cures were both universal in their nature, and miracu- lous; but it must have been sacramental. And as its use was well known in the anointing of persons dedi-

¹ In Matt. x. 29.

cated to God, as prophets, priests, and kings, it was in the highest degree expressive, as well as miraculously operative in cures; for, while it conveyed bodily health, it implied also spiritual sanctification; it was an external sign, expressive in itself of their twofold commission to preach the kingdom, and to heal the sick. It implied the anointing of the Holy One, that all must be as Christ, inwardly anointed of God, with the anointing of prophets, priests, and kings². And the visible miracles wrought by it preached with power the doctrine of Christ, like baptism itself; implying, that they which are called were to be, as by baptism justified, so by anointing sanctified. It was like the imposition of hands, used in miraculous cures, but afterwards to become a sacramental ordinance in the Church, conveying grace. The use here spoken of was probably not from the example but the command of Christ. For we never read of Himself, that He anointed with oil, nor that He baptized; for He gave the inward anointing, of which it was the sign, "He which hath anointed us, is God³." From the mention of it here, and by St. James, it might seem that the use was Apostolic and Sacerdotal, not distributed as some miraculous powers among Christians at large: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord⁴." The use of oil after baptism was discontinued in our own Church, not from any doubt of its scriptural and ecclesiastical authority, but from an apprehension that there was not sufficient faith left in the Church to profit by its sacramental use. The absence of it, therefore, is for our humiliation.

² Rev. v. 10.

³ 2 Cor. i. 21.

⁴ James v. 14.

SECTION III

HEROD HEARS OF CHRIST

ST. MATTHEW, after the above mission of the Twelve, and the subsequent brief mention of Christ teaching through Galilee, proceeds to speak of John in prison, sending his two disciples to Christ⁵; recurring to the subject of John by some latent association of thought, as is so often the case with this Evangelist, after he had introduced that mission itself by anticipation, on speaking of the calling of the Apostles. But here St. Mark and St. Luke proceed to the mention of John's having been slain by Herod; and St. Matthew's narrative, after our Lord's visit to Nazareth, comes in to confirm and fall in with this order of events. "*And king Herod heard of Him, for His name was spread abroad*" (Mark). Though one of his household already ministered unto Him, yet only now is the attention of the king awakened. "The princes of the world," says Jerome, "are the last to hear of the preaching of Christ." "It was from his pride and thoughtlessness," says St. Chrysostom; "they who are in authority are slow to learn these things, because they do not regard them." "*At that time*" (Matt.), i. e. about this period of His ministry, "*Herod the Tetrarch, heard*" (Matt., Luke) "*of the fame of Jesus*" (Matt.), "*of all the things that were done by Him*" (Luke). "*And he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had arisen from the dead; by some that Elias had appeared;*"—the words are appropriate, not that Elias had arisen again from the

⁵ Matt. xi. 1, 2.

dead, as is said of John or one of the prophets, but had "appeared;" inasmuch as Elias had not died, but been translated; "appeared," as he did at the Transfiguration. "*By others, it was said, that one of the ancient prophets had risen again. And Herod said, John I have beheaded; but who is this of whom I hear such things?*" (Luke). Such is the only mention in St. Luke of John's death. This account is in the highest degree interesting and remarkable; although prophecies are not known till they are fulfilled, yet they give rise to vague impressions of truth. It appears from this, that there was at this time current throughout the world, a new apprehension of some arising from the dead, and thereby the showing forth of great power; that Elias, who had been set forth in John, was yet to appear; and the great Prophet, foretold by Moses, was about to come as one alive from the dead. Such being the general feeling, his guilty conscience said to Herod, "John I have beheaded," and shall hear of it again; the crime kept watch over him, and fear took the shape of these vague rumours. "*And he said*" (Matt., Mark), "*unto his servants, This man*" (Matt.) "*is John the Baptist; he hath risen from the dead; and on this account mighty works do show forth themselves,*" or work and operate, "*in him*" (Matt., Mark). By saying this, they showed that they could believe in resurrection; and in the power of the resurrection to do mighty works; yet they would not believe in Christ's resurrection, notwithstanding the mighty works that went before and after. Thus superstition grasps the shadow while it rejects the truth. "*Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.*" But these things did not fix the attention of Herod; the other report was one that could not pass by him; for most

certain it was, in the depth of Divine truths, that he should meet the holy Baptist again in the resurrection. In that, guilty king, thy fearful conscience divineth aright! "*But Herod, when he heard thereof, said, It is John, whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead*" (Mark). "*And he sought to see Him*" (Luke), in a strange but not uncommon mixture of curiosity and fear.

Chrysostom suggests, that by the mention of "the Prophet" his attendants veiled their own apprehension that it was the Christ; and that the remark of Herod was ironical. But St. Augustin⁶ supposes, that, as St. Luke states, his servants said so; and that he took up their words, and either doubting or confirming them, says to his servants, as the others add, "It is John the Baptist." But even deep-seated fears will sometimes express themselves in a tone of ironical and contemptuous levity, veiling thereby the uneasiness within.

St. Matthew, on speaking of Herod's having put the Baptist to death, now proceeds, as his manner is, to mention the circumstances of John's imprisonment and death, and in this order of his narrative he is followed, as is sometimes the case, by St. Mark; St. Luke having previously spoken of his imprisonment, in describing his teaching. At what precise time John's death took place, does not appear; but a few months preceding this time, he was sending disciples to Christ, as if preparing for his departure; and at the feast at Levi's house, they appear not yet to have attached themselves to Christ, as they probably did on their master's death. In the former year⁷, we have introduced the circumstances of Herod's casting him into prison on account of Herodias, and being only deterred from putting him to death by fear of

⁶ De Cons. Ev. lib. ii. 91.

⁷ See The Nativity, P. iii. § iv.

the multitude. "*And when a convenient day was come*" (Mark), for the incestuous queen to obtain her purpose; "*when the birthday of Herod was kept*" (Matt., Mark), "*he made a banquet to his lords and high captains, and the chief men of Galilee*" (Mark); "*and when the daughter of (the same,*" Mark) "*Herodias (came in and,*" Mark) "*danced (in the midst of them,*" Matt.), "*and pleased Herod*" (Matt., Mark), "*and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee*" (Mark).

From the Baptist's words, "it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife," it seems that her husband was not alive; for of adultery the holy Baptist would have spoken in other terms than these of pointing out the Law. And this is strongly St. Chrysostom's opinion. "John blames," he says, "but with moderation⁸." It seems likewise confirmed by the presence of her daughter, as rendering it more likely that her father Philip was dead; while, at the same time, as the last-mentioned writer observes, it establishes the crime; for had it not been for a daughter surviving, the Law would not only have allowed, but would have required such a marriage. Origen, while he mentions this as the opinion of some, is himself inclined to think his brother Philip was alive⁹. St. Augustin considers it doubtful¹⁰.

No good man, says Origen, is spoken of in Scripture as keeping his birthday: the two mentioned are both evil, Pharaoh and Herod. Both are types of evil; both are days marked with blood¹. But the Church keeps the birthdays of the departed from their martyrdoms; for the

⁸ In Matt. Hom. xlviii. 4.

⁹ In Matt. tom. x. 22.

¹⁰ De Fide et Oper. xix.

¹ In Matt. and Gen. xl. 20.

day of their death was better than the day of their birth², and "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints³." John had on this day a better birthday than Herod; with both this was a day that cast forward its shadow on endless years.

"Wherefore with an oath he promised" (Matt.), "and he sware unto her" (Mark) "to give her whatsoever she might ask" (Matt.), "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give thee, unto the half of my kingdom." It seems to have been an oriental form of promise on such an occasion, as Ahasuerus the king says to Esther, at the banquet of wine, "What is thy petition? and it shall be performed, even to the half of my kingdom⁴." The repetition of the promise in St. Mark seems to imply a fuller and formal declaration of it before the company at the banquet. "And she went out and said to her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she straightway came with eagerness unto the king" (Mark), "and thus instigated by her mother, she said" (Matt.), "I will that thou forthwith" (Mark) "here" (Matt.) "give me in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was grieved (exceedingly," Mark). He was grieved, because he himself, as St. Mark had before told us, greatly respected John, and attended to him, and also because he feared the effect such a crime would have on the people; though otherwise, under the impulse of his passions, he would have put him to death. "But on account of the oath and them that sat at meat with him" (Matt. Mark);—scrupulous of an oath made to Satan, and before human witnesses, but regardless of the fear of God; "he commanded it to be given her" (Matt.), "he was not willing to refuse her" (Mark). "It

² Eccles. vii. 1.

³ Ps. cxvi. 15.

⁴ Esther vii. 2.

was the devil," as Chrysostom eloquently says, "that danced in the person of Herodias." St. Hilary, who represents Herod as setting forth that false Israel which destroyed the Law in John, adds, "he knew that he ought not to yield; but, constrained by sins as by an oath, and depraved and overcome by the fear and example of princes that sat with him, even in sorrow does he comply with the allurements of pleasure⁵." Origen also speaks as if it were in type the Jewish people, who would imprison and then cut off the Prophetic Word.

"And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought. And he departed and beheaded him in the prison" (Mark). "He sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought" (Matt.), "and he brought his head" (Mark) "in a charger⁶; and it was given to the damsel" (Matt., Mark), "and the damsel gave it to her mother" (Mark), "and she brought it to her mother" (Matt.). With such strange union indissoluble are lust and murder connected. And thus one crime leads to another, and then to another in a continuous chain of evil; the unlawful marriage led to the murder of the Baptist; and this murder, searing the conscience, to the mockery of Christ at last. While with strange prophetic divination he now catches darkly at a shadow and type of truth, by some mysterious intimations of the evil one that possessed him; as if the spirit of Elijah departed was descending with a double power on Elisha, connected with some rising from the dead: yet it is spoken in mockery, as by an evil spirit guessing at truth, with a mixture of fear and derision; and then, relieved of momentary apprehension, the heart is the more hardened.

Thus he who was greatest among those that were born

⁵ In Matt. ad loc.

⁶ "In a platter," Old Trans.

of women, died by a death the most ignominious of all deaths, to gratify an incestuous king, an adulterous widow, and her daughter, at a dance. A sacrifice to revenge, and lust, and false honour. So strongly were the indications of the Cross breaking forth in living type. Herod, too, becoming the unwilling and reluctant author of crime, giving up John to the offer he had made to one acting at the instigation of her mother; like Pilate yielding Christ to the request of the people, set on by the adulterous Synagogue. Yet, as St. Chrysostom observes, the Evangelist speaks with all tenderness, even almost as if excusing him, introducing every thing that could palliate the deed: "for the oath's sake," and "on account of them that sat at meat," and he was "very sorry;" and of the maid, she was "instigated by her mother." For a good man, he says, grieves more for the perpetrator of crime than for the sufferer. So do the Saints. "Let us also," he adds, "weep for Herodias."

"And His disciples came" (Matt., Mark), *"when they heard of it, and took up his corpse and laid it in a tomb"* (Mark), *"and took up the body and buried it. And came and told Jesus"* (Matt.). For they had been taught by our Lord's former answer, when two of their number were sent to Him by John, to attach themselves to Him; and subsequently been prepared by Him in the house of Levi for the loss of their master.

Thus lived and died the holy Baptist, the Baptizer and Baptized, whose baptism was in the waters of Jordan, whose baptism was in tears of repentance, and whose baptism finally was in blood: so was he himself purified to wait as Elias on Christ's coming. Oh, blessed Fore-runner, the friend of the Bridegroom, the burning and shining light! May I also patiently suffer for the truth,

and fear not to contend for the same, if need be, even unto death ; that after this frail life, I may be admitted to the marriage-supper of that Lamb of God, Whom thou didst point out to thy disciples !

And here it may be observed, that truth has never succeeded in the world, excepting under apparent failure. Great and gifted men, shaping their conduct in order to obtain apparent success, may obtain such, and that for the course of their lives ; but the good that seems to be done in such cases is but the shadow of truth. Truth itself has never succeeded in the world excepting under apparent failures ;—the discomfiture, the disgrace, the imprisonment, or the death of its supporters. There is one more wise and subtle than man, who allows men to succeed in popular attempts, when he knows that such is but a false appearance of good. For the Cross of Christ, containing within it every principle of truth, is the touchstone whereby it is known whether the truth be of God.

SECTION IV

CHRIST RETIRES WITH THE TWELVE

THERE is in this place some difficulty, for St. Matthew proceeds to add that, "*Jesus, when He heard of it, departed thence by a ship apart into a desert place ;*" where, from the construction, it seems that St. Matthew is speaking of our Lord's hearing of the death of the Baptist from John's disciples. But the parallel passages in St. Mark and St. Luke seem to indicate that the retirement of our Lord on this occasion was on the return of the Twelve from their mission, and the pressure of the crowd ; add to which that

the account of John's death is introduced in St. Matthew as a digression, in which he goes back to a circumstance which had previously occurred ; and therefore one would not expect it to continue from that event in a progressive narrative. For the point in the history to which he had now come, was the circumstance of Christ hearing that the attention of Herod was being turned to Him, on which occasion the Evangelist reverts to some previous events to explain it, and then proceeds with his account. And if we take, as we often must, what appears to be this Evangelist's intention rather than his expressions, there will be no difficulty. There is an instance precisely similar, where he comes on the Wednesday in Passion Week to the betrayal of Judas, where he goes back to the anointing at the house in Bethany on the previous Saturday, and then proceeds from thence to the betrayal, with no allusion to the difference of time ; "then went one of the Twelve:" whereas the occurrences at Bethany are in fact parenthetical : and so in like manner here is the death of the Baptist. The intention of the Evangelist then is really this : "Now when Jesus had heard of all these things," i. e. of the observations of Herod, who was now imbrued with the blood of the Baptist, and had also previously been joined by the disciples of John, with the account of their master's death, —while, at the same time, the Apostles were returning to Him from their mission,—He retired ;—"He departed by ship into a desert place."

"And the Apostles" (Mark, Luke), "when they had returned" (Luke), "gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and" (Mark) "told Him all things what they had done" (Mark, Luke), "and what they had taught. And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile. For many were coming and going, and they

had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed" (Mark). "And having taken them" with Him (Luke) "by a ship" (Matt., Mark), "He departed privately into a desert place" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "of the city called Bethsaida" (Luke). And St. John himself, after an interval of ten or twelve months, at this important place joins the narrative, saying, "After these things," i. e. after the circumstances that occurred at Jerusalem at a previous festival, "Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And there followed Him a great multitude, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased" (John). St. Matthew supplies the reasons of this retirement, being the attention of Herod; St. Mark and St. Luke supply the period when it occurred, being on the return of the Twelve from their mission; and St. John the reason for so many following Him. The castle of Machærus, in which John was confined, and where, therefore, Herod then was, being on the confines of Galilee and Arabia, our Lord retires toward the north of Galilee, and to the furthest limits of that tetrarchy; or, as some suppose, into that of Herod Philip, not directly crossing the lake, as it appears, but passing over a short arm or bay, or rounding a promontory, into a desert district; for we find that, while they are crossing by sea, the multitude follow Him by land to the same place, and anticipate His arrival.

He retired to the desert, in accordance with the advice He had given of withdrawing from persecution. It was, says Origen, according to His own precept, "when they persecute you in this city, flee unto another." For if trial should come upon us, we must needs bear it with great nobleness and courage; but when it is in our power to decline it, not to do so were rashness⁷. "It was to defer,"

⁷ In Matt. tom. x. 23.

says Chrysostom, "the fuller manifestation of His God-head." Or, we might say, to make the same known, as His custom was, more in secret and to the more worthy. "It was in mercy, and because the day of His Passion was not yet come," St. Jerome says, "on which day the Lamb is to be slain, as the sacrament, and the posts of them that believe to be sprinkled with blood⁸." But the occasion of His retiring has reference to that His Passion, which the death of the Baptist now foreshadowed, as His retirement is in order to work that miracle in the wilderness, which is the sacramental mysterious type of the life He is about to give to the world. And St. John's mentioning the approach of the Passover without any very obvious reason for so doing, seems to contain a latent reference to this type.

This departing of Christ, says Origen, into a desert place, sets forth His going to the Gentiles, where He healed them, and fed those that followed Him with the bread that was blessed and multiplied; leaving the place where prophecy had been condemned and destroyed, i. e. in John the Baptist. And the kingdom was taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, that the Word of God might be among them, whereby the desolate hath many more children than she that hath a husband⁹. And Quesnel¹⁰ much to the same effect. "He takes occasion from this their want, and from the approaching Passover, to give His disciples an emblem of the miraculous Passover which He is preparing for His Church."

"*And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him*" (Mark); "*and the people when they*" (Matt., Luke) "*heard and*" (Matt.) "*knew of it*" (Luke),—that is, some beheld their departure, while others heard of it from them,

⁸ In Matt., ad loc.

⁹ In Matt. tom. x. 23.

¹⁰ On St. John.

—and then “*they all followed Him*” (Matt., Luke) “*on foot out of the cities*” (Matt.), “*and ran afoot thither out of all the cities; and out-went them, and came together unto Him*” (Mark). Not that the whole multitude had preceded Him, for our Lord seems already to have retired into the wilderness, or mountainous district, from which He went forth to meet them; but some had gone before, and therefore ascertained the place of His retreat, and others were now flocking thither. Unless with some (such as Maldonatus), we take the going forth and seeing the multitudes to be His going forth from the ship, and finding them on the shore. But the other interpretation is confirmed by St. John, who, previously to the coming of the multitudes, says “*And Jesus went up into a mountain: and there He sat with His disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh;*” which serves in some degree to explain how such a vast concourse was collected together, and also throws additional light on that great miracle which was about to take place. “*Jesus therefore, when He lifted up His eyes, saw a great company come unto Him*” (John); conversing, as St. Chrysostom says, earnestly with His disciples, and turning their attention to Him, and humbling Himself familiarly to them; while they sat looking upon each other, He lifted up His eyes¹. And here it may be observed that our Lord’s object, humanly speaking, of retirement and rest with His disciples, becomes now quite changed on account of His compassions. First of all, therefore, sitting with St. John and the rest, He saw them at a distance, as St. John narrates, and then proceeds to meet them. “*And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude: and was moved with compassion for them*” (Matt., Mark), “*because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He*

¹ In Joan. ad loc.

began to teach them many things" (Mark) ; "*and He healed their sick*" (Matt.). "*And receiving them, He spake unto them concerning the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing*" (Luke).

As when He commanded them not to divulge His miracles, yet they published them abroad all the more ; so here, while He retires from them, the multitudes all the more are gathered around Him ; in both of which circumstances there is surely some mysterious economy ; for when He commanded, and when He retired, He might in either case have obtained His own Divine purpose, if He had so pleased ; but doubtless it was for our sakes. In like manner, as when He speaks of Himself in the Old Testament as repenting, or yielding to human affections, and changed in His own designs, it is for our sakes and for our own instruction that this happens. And now He first teaches them and heals them, and then admits them, as it were, to sit at meat with Him, in the great miracle that sets forth His kingdom. Origen spiritually applies this with great beauty and devotion. To those that were unable to come to Him, Jesus goeth forth, and, being Himself without passions, He is affected with pity in His love for mankind, and not that only, but in pity healeth them. And all these various maladies Origen here applies to the various diseases of the soul, the love of money, of glory, of wife, or children, when it occupies the heart, and soul, and mind, more than the love of God. And observe, he says, that when about to impart to them through His disciples the bread of blessing, He first heals their sicknesses : for they that are still sick are unable to partake of the bread which Jesus blesses. For "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread²."

² In Matt. tom. x. 23 25. 1 Cor. xi. 28

SECTION V

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES

"And when the time was now far spent" (Mark); "when it was now evening" (Matt.); "and the day began to wear away,"—thus at the appointment of the Eucharist, two Evangelists say, "When it was now evening;" one of them, "When the hour was come,"—"the Twelve" (Luke), "His disciples" (Matt., Mark), "came unto Him, and said" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "This is a desert place" (Matt., Mark), "and the time is far spent" (Mark), "the hour is now passed" (Matt.), "dismiss (them," Mark), "the multitude, that they may go into" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "the villages" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "and country round about" (Mark, Luke), "and lodge, and find food" (Luke), "and buy themselves" (Matt., Mark) "victuals" (Matt.), "bread; for they have nothing to eat" (Mark); "for here we are in a desert place" (Luke). "But Jesus" (Matt.) "answering" (Mark) "said unto them, Give ye them to eat" (Matt., Mark, Luke),—"they have no need to depart" (Matt.). They have no need to depart from Me to obtain life, for with Me is life and rest. In His foreknowledge and power He "callesh those things which be not as though they were³." Though the place be desert, "yet," says Chrysostom, "He that feeds the world is there; though the time be past, He that is not subject to time is speaking to you⁴."

But as there is no miracle wrought but by faith co-operating, which the dealings of God would call forth

³ Rom. iv. 17.

⁴ In Matt. Hom. xlix. 1

into act or petition, our Lord's conduct is now directed to obtain this co-operation, as on so many other occasions. *"He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? But this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He was about to do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that each might take some little"* (John). He spoke to Philip, perhaps, as belonging to Bethsaida, and therefore the most natural person to be addressed in those parts respecting provisions that might be procured therein; as one too of a disposition so candid and friendly; perhaps, also, to kindle in him, as in the weaker sister Martha on the raising of Lazarus, the faith that was needful. And so St. Chrysostom supposes, that our Lord conversed with Philip as most needing faith and instruction. Perhaps we might say, as needing it in comparison with the first four⁵: the Good Shepherd carrying, or gently leading, the frail or tender of His flock. "Two hundred pennyworth," a day's wages for two hundred labourers, would be but very little for so vast a concourse. And others take up the words of St. Philip; or it may be that St. Mark mentions St. Philip's remark in a general way: *"And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? But He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? Go and see."* Thus the Lord said unto Moses, when about to work the miracle, "What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod⁶." First arresting their attention to the means, with which he was about to work. And perhaps to show, as He often did, in working His miracles, by their own confession, the full extent of their need.

"And when they knew" (Mark), *"they say unto Him"*

⁵ See Study of Gospels, pp. 405—408.

⁶ Exod. iv. 2. Chrys.

(Matt., Mark, Luke), "*We have here*" (Matt., Luke) "*but five loaves and two fishes*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*except we go and buy victuals for all this people. For they were about five thousand men*" (Luke). But St. John, as at the anointing at Bethany, at the Last Supper, and some other occasions, mentions the particular disciple that spoke, while the others state it generally of them all; and as he tells us it was Philip that spoke of "two hundred pennyworth of bread," where St. Mark uses the more general expression, "they say unto Him;" so here he mentions also the disciple that spoke of the "five loaves and two fishes." Thus St. Augustin harmonizes the accounts, supposing that what St. John states in the person of Philip and of Andrew, is but the more explicit detail of what the other Evangelists state more generally, and in the plural number⁷. But Chrysostom, on the passage in St. John, supposes them to be different circumstances; that the disciples come at one time with the remark, while at another our Lord addresses Philip. However, we find from St. John that, as our Lord's inquiry was directed towards leading on their minds to what He was desirous to do, it was the watchful St. Andrew, ever noticing little indications in things human, and looking up as it were to his Master's countenance for the development thereon of what was Divine, that brings the reply. It is likewise probable that, as on another occasion, his friend St. Philip had appealed to him. "*One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith unto Him, There is a little boy here, who hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes. But,*" I do not mean to suggest that these will answer the purpose; for "*what are these towards feeding so many?*"

⁷ De Cons. Ev. ii. 96.

(John). And this he said, not in ridicule of an impossibility, but in faith, for his offer was accepted, and made the foundation of the miracle. It was his own oblation, as if not reserving them for himself, for which he received a hundredfold in this present time, beside those spiritual and eternal things which it foreshadowed. "*And He said, Bring ye them hither to Me*" (Matt.).

St. Chrysostom, Cyril, and others, thus consider that this was in St. Andrew an indication of faith: not that his faith was perfect, but greater than that of Philip; it was that of one inquiring, waiting, looking up, not fully apprehending. St. Chrysostom^s also supposes that these five loaves and fishes that were brought, belonged to the Apostles, probably to St. Andrew; they say, it may be observed, "*We have five loaves,*" &c. And it must be noticed that they had just retired to this desert, because "*they had no leisure so much as to eat,*" which makes it likely that this was the very provision they had taken with them. This was, therefore, in St. Andrew, the eldest of that company, a giving up of all they had for themselves; this adds a force to such his free oblation. It was, indeed, but little for their own number, but we must remember that, on one occasion, we find the disciples plucking for hunger the ears of corn; at another, that when at sea they had forgotten to take bread; here they have retired to the desert to eat, and yet have but five barley loaves. It is amid an overwhelming multitude faint and weary; in the desert and in hunger; and man's helplessness is God's opportunity. In the desert came the manna; in the desert was Elijah sustained; and Elisha multiplied barley loaves; therefore in child-like, wondering, inquiring faith, looked up the disciple, bringing

^s In Matt. Hom. xlix. 2.

the child with five loaves; not shaping to himself a definite thought, but gazing up, not without hope; in perplexity, but not in despair. And on a subsequent occasion, our Lord, in alluding to this miracle, intimated that faith in Him for support, was what He would have His disciples to learn from it; saying, "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet understand, nor remember the five loaves of the five thousand?" They have nothing to give, they say, but when they bring what they have to Christ, then, with His blessing, they have abundance. He shall "multiply the seed sown"¹⁰.

It occurred in the wilderness, says Chrysostom, in order that He might teach them that it was He Who of old fed them in the wilderness with bread from heaven. Indeed the foundation and type of our Lord's parables and miracles may usually be seen in the Old Testament. And on this occasion still more distinctly in the miracle of Elisha: "His servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof"¹¹. And no less, we may add, do His works and words look prospectively, having eyes both before and after: as showing that, in want of all things, He will sustain the poor. It may further be noticed, that it is of "barley loaves," of the coarser bread, the food of the poor, that a miracle so great and Divine is formed. The poor have the blessings of the kingdom: on that which is more peculiarly theirs the blessing rests; their poverty, when put into His hands, becomes great riches.

Again, the occurrence is throughout expressive of the Divine dealings; He departs, that we might follow; He

⁹ Matt. xvi. 8.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. ix. 10.

¹¹ 2 Kings iv. 43.

waits, that we might ask ; He shows the helplessness of our need, that we may look to none but Him : and when sought in the desert mountains, He welcomes the weary, teaches the ignorant, heals the sick, feeds the hungry. If, moreover, our Lord thus called forth into act the faith of His disciples, in the people also there was something predisposing to the faith required ; so as to render them in some degree meet for the miracle, as following Him, and continuing with Him, forgetful of their necessary food, and the approach of night, and listening to His discourses. For them who follow Christ "in hunger and painfulness," and seek Him in the desert, the Heavenly Table is supplied. And they sit down at His command, as if their food was already prepared and before them ; thus faith is exercised on that which is unseen ; and acts in hope as if it already saw. They sit down at the wonderful, mysterious Table, which they see not. "Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness?" "The eyes of all wait upon Thee."

"*And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass*" (Matt.). Thus St. Matthew speaks generally, but it is remarkable on this occasion, that our Lord does all through His Apostles ; which the other Evangelists thus describe more particularly. "*And Jesus said, Make the men sit down*" (John). "*He said unto His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down*" (Luke). "*He commanded them to make all sit down, by companies and companies, upon the grass. And they sat down, ranks and ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties*" (Mark). "*Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand*" (John). All through Apostles, all in order, all in distribution of companies, as

at some great religious ceremony or festival. Placing them in ranks, that the vast number might be seen, that none should be omitted, and that all might be ceremonial. Blessed order, without which there would be no harmony in heaven! As our Lord had lately sent forth the Twelve on their ministration, so now He takes them into co-operation with Himself in His marvellous acts. The hundreds and the fifties imply division and subdivision: ten, and its multipliers into itself, intimates completeness made of individuals, as Israel was numbered in civil polity; for to Moses it is said, "place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens¹²." And so likewise in military government, "captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties¹."

"And when He had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes, He looked up to Heaven and blessed them" (Matt., Mark, Luke). *"And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks"* (John), *"He brake"* (Matt., Mark, Luke) *"the loaves"* (Matt., Mark), *"and gave them to His disciples"* (Matt., Mark, Luke, John) *"to set them before the multitude"* (Luke), *"that they might set before them"* (Mark). *"And the disciples"* (Matt., John) *"gave to those that were set down"* (John), *"to the multitude"* (Matt.): *"And likewise of the fishes as much as they would"* (John); *"And the two fishes He divided among them all"* (Mark). He took the bread into His adorable holy Hands, whose hallowing touch gave them miraculous power of increase; and looked up to Heaven, as showing, that "every good and perfect gift is from above;" that it was from no power in the elements themselves, but in the blessing from on high. He gave thanks as Man; He

¹² Exod. xviii. 21.

¹ Deut. i. 15.

blessed as God. Perhaps both the thanksgiving and the blessing are expressed by the three Evangelists, saying, He looked up to heaven, that is, in giving thanks, and then, as if afterwards and in a distinct action, He blessed. The lifting up the eyes seems expressive of thanksgiving with our Lord, as it is said, "Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee." That the "giving thanks" was here of no little moment, St. John evinces by mentioning as the great characteristic of this miracle, "The place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks²:"—becoming also an important point in the Sacrament it prefigured, and giving it the name of Eucharist; for this is also in type an Eucharistic Feast. He gave thanks, and then He blessed; He made the oblation, and then He consecrated. If St. Paul "took bread and gave thanks," he also calls the cup, "the cup of blessing which we bless." And, in like manner, Origen calls these "the loaves of blessing." The same writer says, "The Saviour, when He had taken the loaves, first looked up to heaven, with the beams of His eyes, as it were, bringing down power from thence, which should blend itself with the loaves and the fishes that were about to sustain the five thousand: and after this He blessed the five loaves and the two fishes, with the Word and the Blessing increasing and multiplying them³."

Again; His looking up to heaven was intimating His strict union with the Father; and when He blessed, it was with the blessing of the Creator, as when He said to the creatures in the beginning, "Increase and multiply." "He works His miracles," says St. Chrysostom⁴, "sometimes with power, at other times with prayer. In lesser

² John vi. 23.

³ In Matt. tom. xi. 2.

⁴ In Matt. Hom. xlix.

things, He looks to heaven ; in greater, He does all with power." In our Lord's act of thanksgiving, the same writer also dwells on the practical lesson contained in it, as teaching us always to give thanks for food. The breaking of the bread was as in nature the seed is broken before it multiplies itself : while it contains also the mystery of Christ's Body broken for us on the Cross to give life to the world. And further, He might have created and fed them out of nothing, but He takes the five barley loaves ; thus the Gospel, the bread of life, is formed out of the Law, the five books of Moses, which in His hands become pregnant with the mysteries of grace, nourishing to eternal life. Whereas, for some mysterious reason, after the Resurrection the bread and the fish are found prepared, with no material beforehand given from which they were formed. He multiplies both the bread and the fish as showing Himself, says St. Chrysostom, the Maker of both earth and sea. And by looking up He combines the heavens also in threefold union. While distributing all through the hands of men, He shows that this His dispensation was to be carried on through living men, and not as the manna of old ; through the living lightnings of Pentecost, not the sights and the sounds of Mount Sinai.

It was as in nature, when the seed broken multiplies more and more, and continues to increase with latent instinctive power of multiplication ; yet no one knows how or when ; but from the blessing of God imparted in the beginning. "By the same power," says Augustin, "by which He multiplies the harvest from a few grains ; thus in His own hands did He multiply the loaves. For the power was in the hands of Christ. The five loaves were as the seeds, not indeed committed to the earth ;

but multiplied by Him Who made the earth⁵." "Not that the five loaves," says Hilary, "were multiplied into more loaves; but fragments succeed to fragments, and they that are breaking them, find, unawares, that they are already broken. And then the material increases, I know not whether on what serves for the tables, or in the hands of them that receive, or in the mouths of them that eat⁶." And St. Ambrose, "You might see in an incomprehensible manner amid the hands of those who distributed, the particles multiplying, which they broke not; the fragments, too, untouched by the fingers of the breakers spontaneously mounting up⁷." In words throughout much similar to the Hymn ascribed to the same writer, on this miracle and that of the Wine at Cana.

"*And they did all eat, and were filled*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*And when they were filled, He saith unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together*" (John). "*And they took up*" (Matt., Mark), "*and there was taken up*" (Luke), "*what remained over and above*" (Matt., Luke) "*of the fragments, twelve baskets*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*full*" (Matt., Mark), "*and of the fishes*" (Mark). "*And they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten*" (John). "*And they that had eaten of the loaves*" (Mark) "*were about five thousand, being men*" (Matt., Mark), "*beside women and children*" (Matt.).—St. Luke and St. John had before mentioned their number as five thousand, and also say expressly that they were "men;" St. Mark emphatically, by placing the word "men" last in the sentence; and

⁵ In Joan. Tr. xxiv.

⁶ In Matt. ad loc.

⁷ In Luc. lib. vi. 87.

St. Matthew explains what they all meant by adding "beside women and children." Thus the numbering is throughout entirely and expressly confined to the men, though the women and children must have formed a great part of the multitude that were fed. The basket here spoken of, the *cophinus*, was rather large, and the Roman poet speaks of the Jew as a mendicant, carrying therein all his house and furniture⁸. If these baskets were such as the one that first contained the five loaves, there would be twelve times as much remaining as there were at first. And it has been suggested⁹ that each of the Apostles might originally have had one basket committed to him, when the bread was first multiplied, and in which, and from which, it afterwards continued to increase. The five thousand are evidently analogous to the five loaves: the twelve baskets that remained, to the twelve Apostles that ministered. Again, as ten implies completeness in the aggregate of numbers, five and its multiples indicate what is progressive to that state. And if the state of completion is signified by the expression, "the Lord shall come with ten thousand of His saints," and "a thousand times ten thousand minister before Him;" the number "five thousand" may indicate a state of incompleteness progressive to that plenitude of number. Thus St. Hilary observes, that the number five thousand was the incipient Church of Israel in the Acts of the Apostles, "and the number of the men was about five thousand¹⁰." And of the "twelve" baskets remaining, St. Hilary says, "reserved out of the ministration of the eternal food for the people of the Gentiles¹¹." And St.

⁸ "Judæis, quorum cophinus fœnumque supellex.—*Juv. Sat.* iii.

⁹ See Cor. a Lap. and Maldon.

¹⁰ Acts iv. 4.

¹¹ In Matt. ad loc.

Augustin, that the "five thousand" were the people of Israel fed by the five loaves, as before set forth by the sick folk lying in the five porches of Bethesda¹. In another place he says, that the five thousand were the people placed under the five books of the Law². And Origen, that the number five refers to the senses: this miracle was more in what is sensible and external, representing men living in the world, bound by precepts of the Law; the four thousand and seven loaves afterwards being interpreted of the more advanced and spiritual in Evangelical perfection and grace. We may add, that if they sat in companies multiplied by ten, the multiple of vast numbers, and were served by the Twelve, this may contain some latent reference to the final number of the elect who "shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," shall eat and be filled in the presence of God with the plenteousness of His house. For the Church of the elect is represented by the Twelve tribes, multiplying their thousands, so that of each tribe Twelve Thousand were sealed³. Some reason of this kind may account for the number five thousand being so repeatedly stated, inclusive of the men only; of the ranging in ranks of fifty and a hundred; and the latent reference contained in all this to the numbering of the children of Israel, as it was prescribed in the Law, carries on the thoughts to such ulterior fulfilment in the final revelation.

It does not seem evident what is meant by so much bread remaining over and above, and the same being gathered up so carefully by the Apostles themselves; it is certainly like the ways of God in His natural providence, where there is great profusion of His gifts, even to apparent prodigality, that "waste" in nature

¹ See p. 5.

² Ser. cxxx.

³ Rev. vii. 1. 9.

which Bishop Butler speaks of; and it may refer to Christ's kingdom of grace, in which the means of life are abundant, beyond those who are found to receive them; and yet are not lost. "It shall return to you again," said our Lord of His Apostles' gifts. And thus the great abounding of Christ's gifts may have been represented by the miracle of Elisha, the type of Christ in His Church, of which it is said, "they shall eat and leave thereof." Whereas the manna given by Moses was only what was required, sufficient for each; the widow's oil multiplied by Elijah was only what was needed. For, in distinction from the prophets it is said of our Lord, that God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him. Yet, at the same time, it is to be observed, that the superfluity was not at random, but accurate, and proportioned to the number required; another proof, St. Chrysostom observes, in addition to the miracle itself, of His unspeakable power. "Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight⁴." So much remaining may be also intended to convey this lesson, that they who distribute bountifully to the poor shall have more remaining than they have given away; the Apostles had but little, only five loaves, and even that little they freely dispense with; therefore it is they, the Apostles, who gather up the fragments: while all have enough and abound, not in luxurious living, but in frugal fare, such as is common to all. For it is the more ordinary kind of food, the barley bread. "He hath filled the hungry with good things," "He hath dispersed abroad; He hath given to the poor, His righteousness remaineth for ever⁵."

Now, although the works and doings of Christ are, as

⁴ Wisd. xi. 20.

⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 9.

St. Augustin says, words and sayings which speak their own Divine language; yet we must remember, that the same writer lays it down as a rule or maxim with respect to mystical interpretations, that there are no truths found in them, but that they are also in other places simply and openly revealed; that there are contained in them no new truths; they are therefore like images, and varied reflections and illustrations of great Divine truths in all the dealings of God, certain developments of them in new phases and manifold characteristics; but not in themselves new truths. We may, therefore, with the less fear and scruple, endeavour to open the same as they are acknowledged by approved ancient writers: inasmuch as they do not pretend to point out the way of truth; but only to illustrate it as known before, and to diversify that which is in itself unchangeable.

“Let us ask the miracles themselves,” says Augustin, “what they speak of Christ; for if they are understood, they have a tongue of their own. Nor let us be delighted with the surface alone; but search into the depth⁶.” “The work,” says St. Hilary, “surpasses human understanding: and whereas in many things we want language to express our conceptions: in this, perception itself is overwhelmed and astounded at the contemplation, from the difficulty of comprehending that which is unseen⁷.” “The circumstance is throughout,” says the same writer, “a complete series of types.”

It was “when the evening was now come;” for now at the end, in the evening of time, hath Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. “It shall come to pass,” says the prophet, “that at evening time it shall be light⁸.” And the season of the year is at the approach

⁶ Tr. xxiv. 1.

⁷ In Matt. ad loc.

⁸ Zech. xiv. 7.

of that festival, when Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: for "the passover drew nigh." Maundrell mentions, that the place was pointed out to him as the same in which Joseph was sold by his brethren: it is the true Joseph given up to the Gentiles, that in the Egypt of the world He might again arise and provide bread for His people. "When the evening was come," that is, says Origen, "at the end of the world;" as St. John says, "it is the last time." And the time is far spent, that is, the season of the Law and the Prophets is passed: for "the law and the prophets were until John," and he has been beheaded in prison. But now it is said to the Apostles, Give ye them to eat; they have no need to depart^o. And St. Hilary, "He gives thanks to the Father, that after the times of the law and the prophets He Himself was to be converted into Evangelic food¹." And, by looking up to heaven, He teaches them from whence they are to look for the true bread that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world: while He bids them to sit down, as implying that in His kingdom they shall find rest,—rest in the wilderness, apart from the cares and troubles of the world.

Again, the five barley loaves are interpreted by Origen and St. Augustin of the five Books of Moses; as containing indeed nourishment within, but enveloped in a coarse husk, adhesive and stripped off with difficulty, as the letter of the Old Testament wrapped in coverings of carnal sacraments². And in another place, "the barley is the old law compared with the wheat of the Gospel." The two fishes, some apply to the Psalms and the Prophets as added thereto, giving savour and pleasant taste to the barley loaves. But Origen speaks of the two fishes as the

^o In Matt. tom. xi. 1.

¹ In Matt. ad loc.

² In Joan. Tr. xxiv.

doctrine of the Father and the Son. The regal and sacerdotal anointing, says Augustin³. But in another place⁴, in addition to this interpretation, he adds, the two laws of love, love of God and of man; or the two people of the circumcision and the uncircumcision. The expounding of the Scriptures he explains to be the breaking of the loaves. And from this store the more is given the more does it increase; this is not the case with earthly, but with heavenly things: wherein to impart to others of Divine treasures and spiritual food adds to our own. For the nature of that treasure being not finite but heavenly, it admits not of loss by distribution, but is itself increased thereby. The Apostles serve, bearing the baskets, supplying the people with food, and gathering up what remains; for such are servile offices, which set forth the ministerial functions. "The servant is not greater than his Lord." "I am among you as he that serveth." "If any one will be great among you let him be your minister. As the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

The ranging in companies is taken by Origen for diversity of treatment, which different classes of Christians require: by St. Gregory, for the different Churches that make up the one Catholic. And they sit in hundreds, which is the sacred number, says Origen, and dedicated to God, as ever returning to one—to the unity of God; such are they who shall find rest with the food which Jesus gives. Or else in the rank of fifty, the number which contains remission of sins, according to the mystery of the Jubilee, which occurred in the fiftieth year, and of the Feast of Pentecost⁵. St. Augustin says, the number

³ In Joan ad loc.

⁴ Ser. cxxx.

⁵ In Matt. tom. xi. 3.

fifty contains a great Sacrament, being one added to the seven times seven,—the Spirit given, love shed abroad in the heart, and the rest of eternity⁶. But those only are contained in the ranks of hundreds and of fifties who are “men,” which Origen interprets as a type spoken of those who are come to full age in Christ, in distinction from those of whom St. Paul speaks, that he was unable to feed them with meat, “I could not speak unto you,” he says, “as spiritual, but as carnal, as unto babes in Christ⁷ ;” and of himself, “when I became a man I put away childish things⁸ .”

As the number five is usually taken to speak in mystery of the five senses, it may here imply the whole man being refreshed and sustained by the five loaves, as all his faculties become sanctified to his Master’s use : when the eyes shall see the fading nature of the world ; the ears shall hear nothing but the voice of God’s providence ; the sense of smell shall be but the remembrance, it is said⁹ , of corruption and death ; and the touch which tells of pain shall nail to the Cross of Christ ; and the taste shall drink of Christ’s cup, partaking of the worm-wood and the gall ; and thus, mortified from things earthly by the revelation of Christ in His kingdom, they shall be refreshed and satisfied ; when the eyes “shall see the King in His beauty¹ ;” when the ears shall receive “the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever ;” when His chosen shall “taste and see how gracious the Lord is² ;”—yea, sweeter than honey and the honey-comb : when His “name shall be as ointment poured forth³ ;” when the hands shall handle the Word of life⁴

⁶ Enarr. in Ps. cl.

⁷ 1 Cor. iii. 1.

⁸ 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

⁹ Vit. Chr.

¹ Isa. xxxiii. 17.

² Ps. xxxiv. 8.

³ Cant. i. 3.

⁴ 1 John i. 1.

according to His own invitation, "Handle Me, and see that it is I Myself⁵." Then the poor shall eat and be satisfied; then shall it be fulfilled, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God;" then shall they "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Thus may these things darkly speak of those good things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive;"—although it be true that in some sense "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit⁶."

Perhaps it may be as well here to notice generally some remarkable points of similarity between the two miracles of the loaves; for they are so far alike, that, as Augustin has observed, if they had both been given only by separate Evangelists, and not as they are, both occurring in the same Gospels; many persons would have inferred that they were different statements of the same circumstance⁷. They both take place in the wilderness, like the manna of old: in both our Lord is said to be moved with compassion for the multitude: in both an appeal is first made to draw the attention of the disciples: in both He takes bread from them, on which the miracle is formed: in both there are fishes beside the bread: in both He gives first to the disciples, and then they to the multitude: in both the men only are numbered, without the women and children: in both there are fragments remaining. But there runs through this a slight variation, together with this unity of general design and purpose; as in nature there is a remarkable resemblance in objects, together with remarkable diversity called forth by new adaptation. The last miracle takes place on the

⁵ Luke xxiv. 39.

⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

⁷ De Cons. Ev. ii. 105.

third day, as the children of Israel went three days' journey out of Egypt to sacrifice in the wilderness ; it is not as this on the evening of the day. The loaves are not five, the number of the Law ; but seven, the number of the Spirit ; they are not therefore said to be of barley : the number fed are not the five thousand of Israel, and under the Law ; but the four thousand brought in by the four Gospels from the four ends of the world : and the fragments are not according to the number of the Apostles that minister, but of the loaves : the seven gifts of the Spirit and the seven Churches. But it may be observed, that as twelve usually denotes finite aggregate of numbers, seven is of what is infinite. The seven baskets were probably of a larger kind than the twelve ; for the same word is never applied to both occasions⁸. When St. Paul was let down from the wall of Damascus "in a basket," it is expressed by that used in the latter miracle⁹.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world" (John). "Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness¹?" was a proverbial saying, Chrysostom observes, among the Jews, to express the greatness of a miracle. They acknowledge Him therefore not merely as a Prophet, but as "the Prophet" foretold of Moses ; but they do not receive Him as God, nor do their thoughts extend higher than to make Him a king. Conversing together as they sat at the Feast, and as they gathered in groups afterwards when the Feast was over, they spoke of Him to each other as that Messiah Who should support them with good things ; with corn, as Joseph ; with manna from heaven, as Moses ; as Solomon

⁸ See Matt. xvi. 9, 10. *κοφίνους* and *στυρίδας*.

⁹ Acts ix. 25.

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 20.

with corn, wine, and oil ; as Elijah with refreshing rains ; as Elisha with great abundance ; but their heart was hardened that they saw Him not as the Holy One of God, Who should deliver them from their sins ; nor as being Him Who openeth His hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness. They receive Him as "the Prophet," but not, says Augustin, as the Lord of Prophets, not as Him Who Himself filled and sanctified the Prophets². They said, let us make Him a king, when they ought to have said, "Come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker."

"Let us," says Augustin, "be converted unto Him Who hath done these things. He is the bread that came down from heaven ; the bread that feeds, and fails not : which may be received, cannot be consumed³." "He gave them food from heaven ; so man did eat angel's food." What is the food from heaven, but Christ ? But in order that man may eat angel's food, the Lord of angels hath been made Man. For if it had not been so, we should not have had His flesh to eat ; and if we had not His flesh to eat, we should not have to eat the Bread of the Altar⁴."

"God works more invisible miracles," says Quesnel on this passage, "than He does visible." Thus greater are the miracles which in nature He performs daily, which men do not note, because "their hearts are hardened ;" while out of a few seeds of corn He produces the fruitful harvest ; by the increase and multiplying of all His gifts, and through the instrumentality of His servants, sustains,

² In Joan. ad loc.

³ Panis, qui reficit, et non deficit ; qui sumi potest, consumi non potest.

⁴ Serm. cxxx. Ben. Ed.

in manifold ways, all His creatures : while men sit down and eat, and rise up, and think very inadequately of His sustaining Presence. Then too after the quiet and unnoted miracles of the day, He brings forth the more astounding marvels of the night. And if in His natural Providence, how much more is this the case in the kingdom of His grace, that He works more marvels invisible than those which the eyes can notice, while He feeds and sustains His Church with what St. Augustin calls "the Bread of the Altar?"

SECTION VI

CHRIST AGAIN RETIRES TO THE MOUNTAIN

It is not probable that so large a concourse as five thousand men would have quietly dispersed to their homes, without some sensible effect arising from the marvellous scene which had just taken place, and from the indication of the power displayed, however wrongly and imperfectly such power was understood. And this St. John alone intimates, not as of itself a matter of any moment, but as assigning the reason for our Lord's consequent retirement. "*Jesus therefore, when He perceived that they were about to come and seize Him by force, that they might make Him a king ;*" —not only in consequence of the display of His power and goodness, but also because, as the great Prophet that should come, He must be the king likewise of the Jews. They wished to make Him a king, to anticipate that secret time which is laid up with God, when His kingdom shall have come, for which we pray⁵ ; that kingdom of which

⁵ Aug. Tr. Joan. in loc.

the Father hath placed the times and seasons in His own power; that kingdom which prophecy foretold, which creation longeth for, which is being formed in secret, and gathered in unto that King that wears the crown of thorns. Perceiving, therefore, that the multitude would anticipate His kingdom,—for even as to earthly kingdoms, which are shadows of the heavenly, he is not a King who is made of the people, but he that is anointed of God;—perceiving this, “*He departed again into the mountain Himself alone*” (John). Twice He went up to the mountain; He first retired, and then came forth to heal and to feed and to teach the multitude, and then again retired; He passed from His devotions at the call of charity, and then again He to them returned. Thus also in the garden, at the call of charity He came from His prayers, and then returned to them. He went up again into that mountain from whence He had come forth with His disciples to the multitude; but now He retires without them, as St. John shortly intimates, by saying, “Himself alone.” But the two first Evangelists mention this circumstance of His parting from His disciples, more in detail after the miracle, although they do not, as St. John, assign the reasons of His retirement alone.

“*And straightway (Jesus) Matt.) “He compelled His disciples to enter into a ship;”* the word intimates forced constraint, as if they were unwilling to leave Him; “*and to go over unto the other side*” (Matt., Mark) “*to Bethsaida*” (Mark). St. Luke mentions that the desert, where the miracle took place, belonged to Bethsaida; St. Mark, that they now intended to cross over to Bethsaida after the miracle. But there is no reason to suppose this Bethsaida, as some suggest, a place different from that usually known by the name: for the exact locality of it is very

uncertain ; and it appeared before that persons could readily go on foot as well as by sea to this place of our Lord's retirement, from the country of His previous teaching. The best opinion seems to be that which is supported by the testimony of Josephus, that Bethsaida was at the head of the lake at the north-east, by the mouth of the Jordan, in the dominion of Herod Philip ; and Capernaum, which from this account evidently is near to it, on the western side. He constrained them to depart, "*while He Himself dismissed the multitude*" (Matt., Mark). The expression itself of our Lord's "dismissing" the people, and the remarkable mention of this definite object, seems to imply something of a formal dismissal, and probably with the blessing of Peace. The same act of dismissal is recorded likewise after the other miracle of the loaves. Thus also at the point of arising from the Table of the eucharistic Supper, it is said, "Peace I leave with you ; My peace I give you." "That dismissal," says Origen, "which no one hath authority to confer, save Christ alone ; and which it is not possible for any one to receive, unless he hath first eaten of the bread which Jesus blesseth⁶." At the same time, our Lord's now being left without His disciples, would render His retirement without observation more easy, according to the motive St. John assigns to it.

"*And when He had sent them (the multitude)*" (Matt.) "*away, He departed into the mountain to pray*" (Matt., Mark), "*privately. And when the evening was now come, He was there alone*" (Matt.). St. Matthew had used this same expression, "when the evening was now come," previous to the feeding of the people ; but St. Luke had there explained it by saying, "when the day began to decline," and St. Mark, "when the time was now past ;"

⁶ In Matt. tom. xi. 5.

but we know that there are two evenings spoken of among the Jews, the earlier and later, and St. Matthew's expression is therefore in both cases accurate as an Hebrew. He went into the mountain to escape, says one Evangelist ; He went thither to pray, say the others : but there is in this no incongruity, but, as St. Augustin says, it contains a lesson for us that where there is necessity for escape, there is also great necessity for prayer⁷.

Thus was it also after the Last and Holy Supper, when He blessed and brake the true Bread that came down from heaven, He afterwards retired alone to pray ; thus Elijah, after the bread given by the angel, went unto Horeb, the mount of God ; thus it was after the children of Israel had been fed with the manna, that Moses went up alone into the holy mount ; thus the High Priest after the sacrifice went alone into the Holy of Holies, leaving the people without ; thus Christ Himself, after He had given His Body to be the life of the world, ascended up to heaven. Thus also would He teach His people, that after partaking of His Body and Blood, retirement and prayer are most suitable ; or that after being in the midst of the crowd and the conversation of the world, it is most needful to ascend into the mountain-top to be alone with God, even although those employments have been works of charity.

St. Hilary says, His being alone in the evening represents His sorrow at the time of His Passion, when the rest were scattered from Him. But it is to this last-mentioned circumstance of our Lord's ascent to heaven, that this His retirement into the mountain to pray alone is usually applied. Thus St. Augustin says, "That mountain signifies the height of heaven. For, having left the multitudes,

⁷ De Cons. Ev. ii. 47.

the Lord, after the Resurrection, ascended alone into heaven; and there, as the Apostle says, 'He maketh intercession for us.' For He is Alone as yet, the First-begotten from the dead after the Resurrection of His Body. The Head of the Church is above, that the rest of the members may follow at the end. If there He maketh intercession for us, above the height of all creatures, as it were on the mountain-top, He prayeth alone⁸." And much the same in another place of this His fleeing into the mountain. "The First-begotten from the dead, ascending far above all heavens, and making intercession for us⁹." And carrying on the same thought, Quesnel¹ says of the same, "Thus Christ enjoys perfect rest and felicity in the bosom of His Father, while His Church is in the midst of the sea of this life." Hence we may observe that there is a peculiar force in the expression that He "constrained" His disciples to depart from Him, leaving Him to ascend alone, as intimating that forced separation from Him which His removal into heaven should occasion, while nevertheless He seems to say to them in their bereavement, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer:" and again, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." Thus was it now in mysterious, wonderful type.

SECTION VII

CHRIST WALKS UPON THE SEA

IN the mean time, while our Lord was praying on the mountain, the disciples were in distress on the sea, being

⁸ Serm. xxv. p. 209. O. T.

⁹ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 4.

¹ On St. Mark.

constrained by Him to depart from Him. "*And when evening was now come*" (Mark, John), "*His disciples went down unto the sea: and entered into a ship, and were going over the sea towards Capernaum*" (John); or it might be, as Augustin takes it, not that they "were going" to Capernaum, but that the Evangelist mentions it by anticipation as the place to which they now went². And, indeed, St. Mark had said that Bethsaida was the place for which they set out, though after the storm they landed at Capernaum; Bethsaida being, as some suppose, very near Capernaum, with nothing but the mouth of the Jordan between them. From the indiscriminate mention of them, perhaps, the abode of the Apostles might have been between the two; or that they had homes at both places alike, from the convenience of fishing, relationship, or some other cause.

"*And the ship was now in the midst of the sea*" (Matt., Mark) "*toiling with the waves*" (Matt.), "*and He alone was on the land, and He saw them toiling in rowing*" (Mark). St. Matthew here speaks of the ship "*toiling* (*βασανίζόμενον*) with the waves;" St. Mark, of the disciples "*toiling in rowing*;" both of them use the same expression, which implies, struggling with difficulty, and in grievous trial; and it is a remarkable instance of what we sometimes have occasion to observe, of St. Mark taking up an expression from St. Matthew, and using it with a different sense or application³. It is also characteristic of St. Mark in the change of terms; St. Mark is usually more personal in his descriptions, both of our Lord, and of themselves, the disciples, "He saw them toiling:" whereas St. Matthew's expression, speaking only of "the ship" and "the waves," does not introduce

² In Joan. Tr. xxv. 5.

³ See p. 171.

living agents⁴. “*And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them; and the sea was stirred by a great wind blowing. And when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs*” (John), or between three and four miles: “*and about the fourth watch of the night*” (Matt., Mark), which is from three to six o’clock in the morning, “*they see Jesus*” (John). The previous expression therefore of St. Mark, that our Lord “saw” them from the shore “toiling in rowing,” must have applied to the earlier part of the night when they were near the shore, and not to this time when they were miles distant, and it was towards morning. And the mention of this by St. Mark, that our Lord “saw” them, a circumstance not leading to any thing ensuing in the narrative, nor connected with any inference, may intimate the knowledge that the writer, or St. Peter, had, that their distress had been seen and noticed by our Lord previously; which a watchful disciple, having once observed, could not but have thought of during that night, and which would afterwards have been a very interesting circumstance in his recollection; as showing, that Christ is not ignorant of, or inattentive to our distresses. “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them⁵.” “Lord, Thou knowest all my desire; and my groaning is not hid from Thee⁶.” As it was now the fourth watch of the night, the storm had therefore continued for nine hours, during the whole of which they were in danger and much difficulty, and had only advanced about three or four miles; the whole way across the lake being but about six as Pliny mentions, or five as Josephus states: but this their passage does not appear to be a

⁴ See Study of Gospels, P. i. § v.

⁵ Isa. lxiii. 9.

⁶ Ps. xxxviii. 9.

direct crossing, but rather over a bay or side, which, as the lake was more than twice as long as it was broad, might have been longer than a direct crossing of the lake would have been.

But now after this circumstance, of our Lord noticing their danger and trouble, where does He depart,—but into a mountain to pray. He forces them into the boat,—He witnesses their distress, yet He comes not to them, but retires to the mountain. This is of itself very striking, and a great lesson to us when the Church is in danger. “The ship,” says St. Augustin, “that carries the disciples, that is the Church, is tossed by temptations,—and the devil, as an adverse wind, strives to hinder her arriving at rest. But greater is He Who maketh intercession for us⁷.” “And for what,” says Origen, “did He go up to the mountain to pray? Perhaps for the multitude, that, being dismissed after the loaves of blessing, they might do nothing to contravene the blessing of Jesus. And for the disciples, that being by Him compelled to embark into the ship, and to go over to the other side, they might suffer nothing from the sea or the opposing wind. And I would be bold to say, that it was owing to that prayer of Jesus to the Father for His disciples, that they suffered nothing on the sea, nor from the wind that opposed them⁸.” This he would of course apply to the fuller mystic and prophetic meaning. “For who are they,” he says, “whom He constrains to pass over to the other side? not the multitude whom He stays to dismiss, for the multitude are not mystically Hebrews, which is by interpretation, those that pass over.”

As a spectator, therefore, and, as it were, from afar, Christ views our trials, and yet appears not to interfere,

⁷ Serm. xxv. 4. O. T.

⁸ In Matt. tom. xi. 6.

but perhaps is in the mean while interceding for us ; and not till they are now far from land, and in the darkness of the night, and the storm is at its full, He appears to their relief. "They see Jesus," says one of them, "*walking on the sea, and drawing near unto the ship*" (John). The other two Evangelists, "*Jesus*" (Matt.) "*cometh unto them walking on the sea*" (Matt., Mark), "*and He wished to pass by them*" (Mark), or seemed as if He would have passed ; a very remarkable circumstance surely, mentioned by this one Evangelist only⁹. "*And the disciples*" (Matt.) "*when they saw Him walking upon the sea*" (Matt., Mark), "*thought it to be a spirit*" (Mark) or phantom ; "*they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit, and for terror*" (Matt.) "*they cried out*" (Matt., Mark). "*For they all saw Him,*" adds St. Mark, again with the peculiar descriptiveness of all that concerned and occurred to the disciples which characterizes him ; to which he also adds, as his custom is, St. Matthew's word,—"*And were troubled*" (Mark). "*And they were afraid*" (John). They all saw Him walking as a spirit upon the sea, approaching near them, but not coming to them, as one that heard and noticed not, passing by as a spirit upon the waters in the storm.

It is not till after the trial has long endured, and is at its worst, that Christ appears. As St. Chrysostom observes, that when the warfare of the righteous is to be finished, then He increases their conflicts, desiring to make greater gain of them. Thus did He with Jacob, and with Job ; their accumulated troubles were at their full when they were most near restoration and relief : thus in the case of Abraham ; his trials had come to the severest of all, even the sacrifice of his son, when the

⁹ See Resurrection, pp. 181. 184.

Divine interposition takes place¹. In their former distress in the storm, He is with them in the vessel, but now He is far from them—with no appearance of help from any quarter; no means of sensible approach to Him in their trouble; thus was He softening their hearts to take that Divine impression from His hand which they needed, and bringing on their minds the feeling remembrance of Himself; and as the night extended, and their toil was in vain, and the storm at its height, He appears. The circumstance indeed seems to have a peculiar reference to their former distress, and the miraculous allaying of the tempest with which it was accompanied: for He is now proving their hearts in a new and unexpected form of trial; they had then some palpable feeling of security, inasmuch as He was with them although asleep; which seemed like a partial withdrawal of the sensible evidence of His presence; and now He puts them to a further effort to walk by faith and not by sight: interposing to sustain that faith by the strong confirmation of His miraculous appearance. Again, on the former occasion of their terror, He first allayed the storm; but now that they are in some degree strengthened and advanced in faith, He requires full confidence in Him while the storm still continues; for it ceases not till He had entered the boat. Thus is it a striking instance of the gradual discipline of the Apostles; first of all by His presence exercising their faith; and then withdrawing by degrees that visible presence; and at length leaving His Church to trust in Him without miraculous interference and manifestation. This careful providential training continually reminds one of the figure of the eagle and her young in the Old Testament²; and Chrysostom here beautifully says of this

¹ In Matt. ad loc.

² Deut. xxxii. 11.

miraculous interposition, it was "as the mother bears on her wings, and brings back to her nest her young one which has left its nest before its time, and has fallen³." Again, it may be observed, that if Christ reserves His disciples for a scene of trial and difficulty, yet it is usually on an occasion when they would be otherwise tempted to something of pride or elation. If the multitude were inclined at this moment to make Him a king, what must have been the feelings of His own disciples? how much tempted to such thoughts of power and greatness? Thus afterwards it may be noticed, that on the many occasions when He instils into their minds an account of His approaching Passion, it is when something occurs which might otherwise fill them with thoughts unsuitable to the humility of the Gospel. And the previous memorable storm that occurred to them, was after His singular distinction of them before all the multitudes, as being blessed with ears to hear the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

"*And immediately Jesus talked with them*" (Matt., Mark), "*saying*" (Matt.), "*and saith unto them*" (Mark, John), "*Be of good cheer*" (Matt., Mark), "*It is I, be not afraid*" (Matt., Mark, John). "It is I," or rather, it is the Divine Name itself, "I AM:" the same expression used at our Lord's apprehension by the servants of the chief priests, as St. John mentions, at the sound of which Name they fell to the ground. It is as usual founded on, or foreshadowed by, the Old Testament; for the commission given to Moses was⁴, "Say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." And our Lord tried the Jews by the same saying, "I AM⁵," on which they took up stones to cast at Him, and rejected Him,

³ In Matt. ad loc.

⁴ Exod. iii. 14.

⁵ John viii. 58.

Who Himself had sent Moses unto them, and now was come Himself. Therefore, at the last, when yielding Himself into their hands as the Messiah and Son of God, He uses the same words, "I AM;" showing His power on His enemies: as now He manifests Himself to the disciples with the same unspeakable Name, and is received by them as "truly the Son of God." It is on these occasions the Name which inspires the wicked with terror or aversion: and from the good takes away all fear.

Again, the walking on the sea was also a manifestation of Godhead. It is mentioned as a Divine attribute in the Book of Job, "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea⁶;" or as the same is given in the Septuagint version, "Who walketh on the sea as on a pavement." And not only walketh upon the waters, but also in the midst of the storm in perfect tranquillity and peace. "He walketh upon the wings of the wind." "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Thou art "a covert from the storm." The circumstance, moreover, is in itself remarkable as one of the very few occasions when our Lord was pleased to suspend the laws of nature with respect to His own Person,—perhaps the only one fully recorded; though it may be indistinctly implied in expressions such as that of, "Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place:" and, He "passing through the midst of them, went His way⁷;" or, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of⁸." And perhaps in His fasting for forty days there may be something of the kind. But this instance sets the great and marvellous before us in a manner different from any other before the Resurrection: unless the Transfiguration

⁶ Job ix. 8.

⁷ Luke iv. 30. John v. 13.

⁸ John iv. 32.

might be considered in the same light, as indicating the latent Divine Power and Glory breaking forth through the human form. Such single and isolated circumstances, are, moreover, like casual gleams, issuing forth beforehand in anticipation of the power of that spiritual Body, which manifested itself in all His operations after the Resurrection. While the miracle afterwards, of St. Peter walking on the waters, seems to intimate, that His Church also shall in Him partake of that spiritual nature in the regeneration. If, again, the last-mentioned miracle of the loaves be taken, as it is by all Catholic writers, for a mysterious representation of the Eucharist, this miracle intervening between that and the ensuing discourse respecting it at Capernaum may contain some latent reference with regard to that miracle; inasmuch as all these three circumstances set before us, under a manifold aspect, the spiritual body of the Son of Man, as being our sustenance and our aid in peril until the end of the world.

Meanwhile, the storm still seems to continue; it is not said that the disciples were relieved from all fear, but it seems to be implied, and the incident that ensues indicates it. "The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly: but yet the Lord, Who dwelleth on high, is mightier⁹." The storm continues, but He is walking in the midst of it, and seen of them and heard; and His voice inspires them with Divine confidence. In the storm and the darkness they know Him not; but when they hear His voice they know Him: thus Mary Magdalen, who took Him for the gardener in the twilight, knew Him when she heard His voice. It is observed¹, that there is this difference between the appearance of a good

⁹ Ps. xciii. 5.

¹ Cor. a Lap. ad loc.

and an evil spirit; the last comes with sensual joy and brightness, and leaves trouble and despair: the former comes in trial, but afterwards inspires serenity and confidence. The same may be applied to those trials which serve as temptations of evil; and those which become a discipline of good.

And now St. Matthew alone proceeds, as in the discourse at Cesarea Philippi, to mention what appertains, as it were, to a certain pre-eminence in St. Peter: perhaps the humility of St. Peter himself might in St. Mark have passed over such things with respect to himself: St. Luke is rather the Evangelist of St. Paul: and the character of St. John's Gospel allows less of details of this nature. "*Then Peter answered Him, and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the waters*" (Matt.). The suggestion was his own, although it met with his Lord's approbation; or rather, the Lord inspired him to ask what He Himself desired to give. But why did St. Peter make such a request? and what object was to be attained by it? Like many of the best actions, it was but the natural expression of that filial confidence and love which casteth out fear: such as was that also of his entering into the hall of Caiaphas; and that of his swimming from the ship to his Lord on recognizing Him after the Resurrection. He had moreover perhaps felt deeply, and remembered the reproof of our Lord on the occasion of the former storm, when He said to them, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith²?" And in his present zeal and confidence he would make reparation for it. He asks not from display, says St. Chrysostom, but from love. For he said not, "Bid me walk on the water, but, Bid me come to Thee³."

² Mark iv. 40.

³ In Matt. ad loc.

And he acknowledged his Lord's Godhead ; for he says not, Pray for me, but, Bid me. Love impelled him to go to Christ ; and faith to walk on the waves ; being thereby assured, that when Christ commands, He gives power to perform.

“And He said, Come. And when Peter had descended from the vessel, he walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus. But when he saw the mighty wind he was afraid : and as he began to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. So immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?” (Matt.). “Save me, O God, for the waters are come in : I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over me.” “Let not the water-flood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up⁴.” “But when I said my foot hath slipt : Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up⁵.” “Observe,” says Origen, “He said not, O void of faith, but, O of little faith ; and, why didst thou doubt ? which implies, having some faith, though declining from it⁶.” This characterizes all the trials of St. Peter ; a faith in Christ not yet established as the Rock, first full and earnest, and then shaken, but immediately restored ; thus after his great confession of Christ's Godhead, he is soon rebuked for being offended at his Master's Cross. When the sound of the waters and the wind were in his ears, his heart began to fail and his feet to sink. Or it may be, as Chrysostom says is sometimes the case, that the greater trial of the waters he withstood, but was shaken by the lesser, that of the wind. Yet though for a moment he doubted, who could have such faith as St. Peter to walk on the waters ? “What shall we say,” says St. Jerome, “who have not even the least portion of this

⁴ Ps. lxxix. 2. 15.

⁵ Ps. xciv. 18.

⁶ In Matt. tom. xi. 6.

little faith?" And again, "Ardent was his faith, but human infirmity drew him into the deep. A little is left to the temptation that his faith may be increased, and he may understand that he is preserved not by the facility of his prayer, but by the power of God⁷." He made him walk, showing the power of His Godhead: He allowed him to sink, to convince him of human infirmity, lest he should make himself equal with God. For it was not on account of the violence of the wind nor the power of the sea that St. Peter began to fail, or the Lord would have allayed them; but from the weakness of his own faith; therefore the Lord seized him by the hand and reproved, not the storm, but his want of faith.

St. Hilary here dwells on what has been sometimes noticed, that this venturing, and the subsequent sinking of St. Peter set forth that season of the Passion when he ventured and fell, and the cry of his repentance was heard, and he obtained pardon. And this, says the same writer, is to be considered in Peter, that he in faith surpassed the rest. For while the others knew not, he first answered, Thou art the Son of God. He first deprecated His Passion while he thought it evil. He first promised that he would die for Him and not deny Him. He first resisted the washing of His feet; and drew forth the sword against those who seized his Lord. The same writer gives a reason why the Lord suffered him not to come to Him, but stretched forth His hand and held him. "Not that Peter was unworthy to approach his Lord as he assayed to do, but there is an order of type. For while the Lord treadeth under His feet all the storms of the world, no one can be a partner of His Passion; for He was to suffer alone and to atone for the sins of all;

⁷ In Matt. chap. 14.

and that which is by One wrought for all mankind admits not of any associate : so as He was the Redemption, Peter was first himself to be redeemed, and afterwards reserved for faith in that redemption, and for martyrdom ⁸.”

And here we may observe, that the Christian Church is bid to come to Christ in the midst of the storm and upon the waters, not that the tempest is allayed in order for her to do so ; implying, that she is not to expect persecutions to cease, but that she is to walk unharmed in the midst of them : it was otherwise with the Israel of old, for whom the waves and the winds were arrested : “dividing the water before them to make Himself an everlasting name ; He led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble ⁹.” The two circumstances may serve for a type of each : for St. Peter represents the Church. “What then,” says St. Augustin, “does Peter’s daring to come to Him on the waters signify ? For Peter generally stands for a figure of the Church. What else do his words imply, but, Lord, if Thou art true, let Thy Church also be glorified in this world : let her walk on the waters, and so come to Thee ¹.” For, to Christians it may be observed, that Divine blessings are mostly through contraries ; the contrary wind, the wind of persecution, bears quickly to the shore. It is in the night of persecution that Jesus Christ comes.

It is also applied to individuals. “And should any one,” says Origen, “more warmly moved by the expression, Be of good comfort,—should any Peter be found among you, who advancing on the road to perfection, but not as yet made perfect, shall descend from the vessel, as being beyond that temptation in which he before was

⁸ In Matt. xiv. 16.

⁹ Is. lxiii. 13.

¹ Ser. xxv. 10. O. T.

toiling, and begin to walk, as if to go to Jesus on the waters; but as yet of little faith, when he seeth the wind boisterous shall be afraid and begin to sink: yet he shall not fail, if he call on Jesus with a loud voice, saying, Lord, save me²." And Augustin in like manner, "Good is it in such peril to betake one's self to prayer. Let Peter cry out as he totters in the water, and say, Lord, save me. For the Lord will reach forth His hand; and though He chide, saying, O, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? wherefore didst thou not look straight forward upon Him to Whom thou wast making thy way, and glory only in the Lord? nevertheless He will snatch him from the waves, and will not suffer him to perish, who confesses his own infirmity and begs His help³." Thus the circumstance of this our Lord's appearing in the midst of the storm at night, is wont to be applied by devotional writers and Divine poets to their own trials: in the midst of darkness, and temptations, and dangers, their faith seems to hear the words, "It is I, be not afraid." They consider it no forced application, but the power of truth inspiring them with comfort.

"Then they wished to receive Him into the ship" (John). "And He went up unto them into the ship" (Mark), "and when they," i. e. Christ and St. Peter, "had entered the ship" (Matt.), "the wind ceased" (Matt., Mark). When He entered the boat all was still, as ever into the heart when Jesus enters all is peace.

"And they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (Matt.). As the circumstances of this miracle are in some respects beyond the other miracle on the sea, so also are

² In Matt. tom. xi. 6.

³ Serm. xxv. 10. O. T. lxxv. Ben.

the words of the Apostles ; after the former storm had been allayed, they said, "What manner of man is this? that even the winds and sea obey Him!" Here there is more silent awe as in the Presence of God, and as if under the deep impression, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." It is one of those occasions wherein the Apostles acknowledge Him as such, before they had come to the fulness and maturity of that faith. But the incidental description of their feelings in St. Mark is singularly interesting: "*And they were beyond measure exceedingly amazed in themselves, and wondered. For they had not understood*" how it had been "*with respect to the loaves. For their heart was hardened*" (Mark). We are naturally inclined to wonder what must have been the state of mind in the disciples themselves at the beholding, and living amidst, such amazing wonders; which was like being in the midst of the creation of a new world: how they could, after witnessing such things and sharing in them, set about their earthly applications, and be as other men. And here one of them seems to explain it, as it must afterwards have appeared to themselves, and perhaps been expressed in their conversation with others, that somehow their heart was hardened, and they perceived it not; but were in some degree as if in seeing they saw not; until thoroughly aroused by a circumstance so amazing as this, to which their previous fear had stirred their attention.

To all these miracles St. John adds another on Christ entering the boat, "*And immediately the ship was at the land whither they went*" (John). They receive Him into the ship, says Augustin, "acknowledging, and rejoicing, and safe from fear. The ship is at the land, from water to dry ground, from trouble to security, from the journey

to the end⁴." Thus the miracle was fourfold, and indeed manifold; first, the walking on the sea; then the supporting St. Peter; then the appeasing of the storm; and lastly, the immediate arrival at the shore, and that although the wind was contrary.

It is evident that the mystical expositions of those ancient writers, who spiritually interpret the whole of this voyage and all the incidents connected with it, is most natural, while they add one link to another in a long series of adaptation, no less real and true than were the winds, and the waves, and the night, and the visible appearance of the Son of Man approaching in the midst. "That little bark," says Augustin, "pre-signified the Church. If we understand not concerning the Church what that bark suffered, those things were not significant, but simply passing over, or transient⁵." "Need there is," he says in another place, "that we be in the ship, that is, that we be carried on the wood that we may cross this sea. Now, this wood on which our weakness is carried, is the cross of the Lord. We are exposed to the violence of the waves; but He who helpeth us is God⁶." Origen lays much stress on the circumstance, that those whom the Lord compelled to enter into the boat of temptations, were not the multitude, but His own disciples, as being more able to withstand the waves, and more worthy to behold Jesus. Nor even them, he says, till after they had partaken of the Bread of Blessing. "The disciples inseparably clinging to Jesus will not be parted from Him even for awhile, so desirous to be in His Presence; but He, judging it desirable that they should undergo the trial of waves and the opposing

⁴ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 7.

⁵ In Joan. Tr. xxv.

⁶ Serm. xxv. O. T.

wind,—which would not have taken place if they had been with Jesus,—constrained them to be separated from Him, and to enter the ship. The Saviour constrains the disciples to enter the ship of temptations, and to pass over before Him to the other side. And when now in the middle of the sea, and unable to reach the shore, the Word having compassion on them, as having done all that lay in their power to do, comes unto them walking on the sea, which has to Him no waves nor wind that is able to arrest His course⁷.” He puts them forcibly away from Him ; He subjects them throughout a whole long night to distress and danger, and at last, even to new spiritual terrors at His Presence. This is very instructive with respect to all His dealings with us ; and blessed are they who are thus tried by Him, that they may receive the more abundant recompense, and be found worthy of Himself ; for who would not willingly undergo all peril and fear in order to have witnessed that miracle, and to see Christ amid the storm ? “And let us remember,” says Origen, “should we be constrained to fall into temptation, that Jesus constrained His disciples into that ship of trials, wishing them to pass over unto the other side. For it is not possible for them ever to reach that opposite shore who have not endured the trials of the waves and the adverse wind⁸.” “And when we see the spirit of the evil one opposing our affairs, let us observe that such is the contrary wind.” “And when the night is far advanced, and the day hath approached, the Son of God shall come unto us, that He may calm the sea, walking thereon.”

Beside such moral interpretations, which are capable of an application to Churches and individuals at all

⁷ In Matt. tom. xi. 5, 6.

⁸ In Matt. tom. xi. 6.

times and places, that there is contained in all this circumstance something prophetic of the last ages of the Church, appears to be the general opinion of ancient writers. Origen, though he applies it throughout to personal trials, yet supposes, that, in the first watch, the father of darkness and wickedness will have to be contended with; in the second, that Antichrist which is the enemy of the Son, exalting himself against all that is called God or is worshipped⁹: in the third watch, that spirit which is opposed to the Holy Ghost: and in the fourth watch, when the night is far advanced, and the day approaches, the Son of God shall come¹. St. Hilary: that the first watch was of the law; the second, of the prophets; the third, of Christ's coming in the Body; the fourth, His return in brightness². St. Augustin speaks of the "twenty-five or thirty furlongs" which they had now advanced; that five is the number of the law, and twenty-five the square of the same, the law fulfilled; and thirty, the five multiplied by six, the completion of all things, when the night is nearly ended at the termination of the world³. And, in another place, "In the fourth watch of the night, that is, when the night was now nearly at its close, so shall He come at the end of the world, when the night of iniquity is finished, to judge the quick and the dead⁴." St. Jerome says, that when it mentions the Lord came in the fourth watch of the night, it shows, that after they had been in peril the whole of the night, at its termination, in the consummation of the world, He would bring them aid⁵. Indeed, the mention of a certain "watch" in the night on this

⁹ 2 Thess. ii. 4.

² In Matt. xiv.

⁴ Serm. xiv. de Ver. Dom.

¹ Ibid.

³ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 6.

⁵ In Matt. ad loc.

occasion, necessarily turns our attention to the mention, in so many places, of the Son of Man appearing in one of the watches of the night, and that, too, in the midst of trials and temptations. "If the good man of the house had known in what watch⁶." "And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants⁷." Thus some expression of our Lord's is often combined with some act on another occasion, or some parable with some miracle; as in the verse preceding the one last mentioned, we read, "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat," words that derive a force from His action at the last Supper. So here He comes on the disciples unexpected in a certain "watch of the night." It is to St. Peter and the Apostles He speaks in warning of a certain watch of the night, in which He shall come upon them.

The distress of the disciples before His coming is considered descriptive of the state of the Church in the last days. Thus, St. Hilary says, "He will find her both wearied out with the spirit of Antichrist, and tossed round about by the motions of the whole world." St. Augustin: "As the end of the world approaches, errors and terrors, and iniquity and infidelity increase; and darkness also; because charity, which St. John says is light, is extinguished; the aboundings of iniquity are the waves; the voices of blasphemers the winds⁸." And again: "Evils and tribulations increase; Jesus passes walking on the waves, that is, treading under His feet all the swellings of the world." Thus, Christians are ever described as looking anxiously for the dawn on account of the trouble; till they behold the morning star

⁶ Matt. xxiv. 43.

⁷ Luke xii. 38.

⁸ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 5.

through the storm, which giveth light through the morning watch till the day dawn.

Again ; the circumstance of their crying out in trouble, when they behold Christ Himself approaching, may contain some mysterious allusion to what is said in prophecy, that when they shall "see the Son of Man coming," "all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him⁹." They were troubled and thought He was a spirit ; as also at the Resurrection, in like manner, when they first saw Him "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled^{1?}" There may be in this a latent allusion to some supernatural terrors which shall be in the last days of the world. Thus St. Hilary says, "On account of their long experience of Antichrist they will be full of anxiety at every new appearance of trial ; and even at the coming of the Lord they will be terrified, apprehending false appearances of things, and ocular illusions. But the good Lord will immediately speak, dispelling all fear, and say, It is I²." And Origen in like manner, "When we shall behold the Word appearing we shall be troubled, before we shall clearly discern Him, and that the Saviour dwelleth among us, thinking that we see but a phantom, and shall cry out ; when He shall straight-way talk with us, saying, Be of good comfort, it is I ; be not afraid³." But St. Augustin seems to suppose it to be the terror of Christians, when they shall behold Christ walking on the waves, or treading down all the lofty things of the world under His feet ; as it shall be in the last days. And their looking upon

⁹ Rev. i. 7.

¹ Luke xxiv. 37.

² In Matt. xiv.

³ In Matt. tom. xi. 6.

Christ as a phantom he supposes may allude to the difficulty which Christians will have in realizing His Presence, when they shall see the nations under His feet, like swelling waves⁴.

Such might have reference to times when all else is considered real and substantial, but religion as a shadow ; when truths themselves appear as falsehoods. "There is sometimes," says Quesnel, on this passage in St. Mark, "a kind of mutiny in the ship of the Church, and a great clamour raised at the sight of certain truths, as if they were errors : and even those who sit at the helm are alarmed at a phantom which they fancy they see. But as soon as Christ speaks their apprehensions vanish."

SECTION VIII

PEOPLE HEALED AT GENNESARET

It was now therefore early in the morning, and before daybreak, that our Lord and His disciples come to shore ; and St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us expressly, that the land to which they had come was that of Gennesaret, and that the people of that country immediately flocked to Him from all parts with their sick. But St. John had not only previously mentioned Capernaum as the place to which they were going, but now also in a continuous narrative speaks of Capernaum as the place to which our Lord had come on this day ; and saying nothing of all these cures or people of Gennesaret, merely passes to the discourse there held. It is obvious from this, that Capernaum was in or near the land of Genne-

⁴ Serm. xxv. 8.

saret, one being probably the name of the region, the other of the town. Thus, St. Augustin considers it, in harmonizing this passage, that Capernaum was the town on the lake, and the country called Gennesaret⁵. And this is confirmed by Josephus, who says, "By the lake Gennesaret there extends a region of the same name, admirable for its beauty. Beside the serenity of the air, it is watered by a very abundant fountain, which is called by the natives Capernaum⁶." Another mode of arrangement in Maldonatus seems full of confusion. We must suppose, therefore, that the two first Evangelists speak of the effect of our Lord's return to these parts, both on the morning of His landing and during His subsequent stay in that neighbourhood; but that some time during this day of His landing, He entered the town of Capernaum; for it was there that He was found not long after His arrival by those who had just returned from the desert of Bethsaida.

It was not till the day after the miracle that these persons came to Capernaum, as St. John distinctly states; and indeed the lateness of the evening, and the tempestuous night that ensued would have prevented their crossing the sea before: it was not till after finding on the next day that our Lord and His disciples had departed that they came to seek Him at Capernaum. Then there ensues, addressed to them, the long subsequent discourse, which St. John says was delivered to them in the Synagogue, and therefore probably on the Sabbath day. It could not therefore have been on the day of their arrival although obviously almost immediately ensuing; for by the time they had come to Capernaum, the day must have been considerably advanced, nor could they have crossed

⁵ De Cons. Ev. L. ii. 102. Ben. Ed.

⁶ B. J. iii. 35.

over from the other side on the Sabbath day. We must therefore conclude that they found our Lord at Capernaum sometime during the day on Friday, and that on the next morning in the Synagogue, i. e. on the Saturday or Sabbath, He spoke to them in such mysterious and sublime terms respecting that miracle of the loaves. If this be the case, and it most naturally falls into this order of time, we shall then be furnished with the exact period of some of the previous occurrences, which is highly remarkable. The miracle of the loaves according to this order of time must have taken place between the two evenings on the Thursday,—the same day, and precisely the same time of the day when the Eucharist itself was appointed; to which Sacrament by the common consent of all Divines, it had throughout a latent continuous reference: both are introduced by the same expressions in the Evangelists, “when the evening was now come.” After both, our Lord retires to pray apart from His disciples; after both, on the same night, they are forcibly constrained from their Lord. If this supposition be correct there is another circumstance, which, with regard to the period of its occurrence, will be no less remarkable: St. Peter’s going forth from the ship, his sinking, and being sustained by our Lord, is always supposed to contain the same kind of typical analogy to his venturing, his denial, and restoration on that night of his Lord’s Passion; and these two events must have occurred at precisely the same time,—on the Friday morning before daybreak,—the same time being expressed in one place by the fourth watch of the night, and in the other by the time previous to the cock-crowing; both implying the same period of the night. As we have often had occasion to notice a mysterious adaptation of days to the circumstance of our

Lord's various manifestations⁷, these occurrences are but consistent with the same.

It was now therefore on their landing in the early morning that the account proceeds. "*And when they had passed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret*" (Matt., Mark), "*and drew to the shore. And when they had come out of the ship, immediately they knew Him*" (Mark). Not any of those five thousand whom He had just previously fed on the evening before in the desert of Bethsaida; for they do not appear yet to have crossed the lake, being still in the same place where the disciples left: but St. Matthew expressly mentions these persons as the inhabitants of this place. "*And the men of that place, when they knew Him, sent to all that country round about*" (Matt.); "*they ran through the whole of that region round about, and began to carry about on beds*" (Mark), "*and brought unto Him all*" (Matt.) "*them that were diseased*" (Matt., Mark), "*where they heard He was*" (Mark). This description of St. Mark is apparently not confined to the immediate period of His landing, and previous to His holding the ensuing discourse at Capernaum, as St. John mentions, but to some days probably, if not weeks, about this time. But the order of the narrative only allows its introduction here;—the other Evangelists making no mention of that remarkable discourse, but embracing in a few words the history of that period. From St. Matthew's expressions, Chrysostom supposes, that it must have been at long intervals between them, that He visited their several neighbourhoods. "*And whithersoever He entered into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the market-places*" (Mark). "*And they entreated Him that they might but touch the hem of His garment. And as*

⁷ See The Nativity, p. 424; and The Holy Week, pp. 26, 27.

many as touched (Him" Mark) "were made whole" (Matt., Mark). It is evident that this place was not far from Capernaum, where our Lord was now going, and it was near Capernaum where the miraculous cure lately took place of the woman that touched the hem of His garment; and it would seem indeed from the narrative that it must have occurred on the last occasion of our Lord being in this place and neighbourhood. This would account for their touching the hem of His garment. St. Chrysostom observes that the Evangelist's mentioning that "the people of the place knew Him," seems to indicate that it was sometime since they had seen Him before; some weeks, at all events, are likely to have intervened. "They knew Him," says St. Jerome, "by fame, not by sight." Probably some knew Him by person, others by report. St. Chrysostom also observes the great degree of reverence which these people now evinced. For they did not, he says, "approach Him as before, dragging Him to their houses, and seeking a touch of His hand: but in a far higher strain, with more self-denial and more abundant faith, they try to win their cure." And this St. Chrysostom thinks was owing to that severity of wisdom taught by the woman who had an issue of blood. This confirms our supposition that it was on the last time of our Lord's being in the neighbourhood. He was on that occasion going from Capernaum, and now He appears to be going to that place; or to have just been there, if we consider these miracles to have taken place after the Sabbath.

St. Hilary carries on the mystical interpretation after the miracle of the loaves. "For the times of the law being ended, and the five⁸ thousand out of Israel having

⁸ These "five" taken to represent the "twelve" of Israel, as before mentioned at pp. 356, 357. 362, is confirmed by Gen. xlvii. 2.

entered the Church, the people of believers met Him, and those out of the law who were saved by faith, set before the Lord their sick: while they that were brought sought to touch the hem of His garment. And as the virtue of the hem went forth from the whole garment, so the virtue of the Holy Spirit went forth from Jesus Christ, and, imparted to the Apostles, as going forth from the same Body, ministers salvation to those who desire to touch⁹." The garment being so often put in figure either for the legal or the Christian Church, the Apostolic ministry would be the hem of that garment, as the Holy Anointing "went down to the skirts of His clothing," redolent with health and salvation. St. Chrysostom still further proceeds to apply this hallowed touching of our Lord's garment to the Holy Eucharist. "Let us then touch the hem of His garment, or rather Himself altogether: for indeed His Body is set before us now, not His garments only: not for us merely to touch It, but to eat, and be filled. Let us then draw near with faith, every one that hath an infirmity¹." And this well and beautifully carries on the subject to the following discourse.

SECTION IX

CHRIST FOUND AT CAPERNAUM

"The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that no other boat was there, save that one whereinto His disciples had entered, and that Jesus went not with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples were gone away alone" (John). They had of course

⁹ In Matt. ad loc.

Hom. in Matt. 1. 3.

made diligent search for Him in every direction to become assured of the fact, that He must in some uncertain miraculous manner have crossed the sea, so that they should seek Him on the opposite coast; having of course ascertained, that He was not in the mountain into which He had retired over night, nor had entered unawares into any other boat which had since approached the shores. For although the boat into which the disciples had entered was at that time and place a solitary one, yet the Evangelist is led to mention, that many others had now arrived in the neighbourhood, in order to account for the multitude being enabled so readily to cross over to Capernaum. "*Howbeit,*" he says, "*other boats had come from Tiberias, near unto the place where they did eat the bread, at the thanksgiving of the Lord.*" As it was customary to give thanks at meals, and as the practice appears to have been on all occasions observed by our Lord Himself in a manner peculiarly impressive, it seems unaccountable that the Evangelist should here introduce the fact of "thanksgiving," as characterizing this miracle, were it not for the sacramental mystery contained in it. Nor, indeed, is the Evangelist to be understood without constant remembrance of this circumstance, such depth and significancy always attends him, as lying on his Master's breast, and therefore knowing, "Thy thoughts are very deep. An unwise man doth not well consider this; and a fool doth not understand it²."

St. Augustin³ observes, that the great miracle of our Lord's crossing the sea, appears from this to have been indirectly suggested or insinuated into their minds; for they knew that the disciples had gone without Him, and that there was no other boat at the place by which He could have crossed: in what way, therefore, but by miracle,

² Ps. xcii. 5.

³ In Joan. Tr. xxx. 8.

could He have passed the sea ? St. Chrysostom also notices the same,—that St. John would not have been so particular in specifying all this, but to teach us, that Christ, although He had not openly shown the miracle, yet in a covert manner wished the people to apprehend what had taken place⁴. This seems to be intimated in the question they put to Him on finding Him.

“ *When therefore the multitude perceived that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also entered into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.*” That they should seek for Him at Capernaum as soon as they had fully ascertained that He had left the wilderness of Bethsaida, was natural, as being the place of our Lord’s usual abode, and that of His disciples ; and likewise from the circumstance of His disciples having crossed over in that direction on the preceding evening. And by the time that they arrived He also had come there. For, in the meanwhile, when they had been making all search for Him on that opposite coast, He had been early in the morning on the shore of Gennesaret, being recognized, and resorted to, by great numbers on that coast, and had perhaps now retired for the approaching Sabbath day to Capernaum, where He was now found by those who had been in search for Him.

“ *And when they found Him beyond the sea, they said unto Him, Master, when camest Thou hither ?*” The expression “ *when,*” seems to imply, that some time, probably a whole day, had already intervened since they had lost Him, which would be the case if it was now the Sabbath day when they thus inquired of Him. Chrysostom here notices their remarkable indifference respecting the miracle, in making no inquiry respecting it ; unless, he says, the

⁴ In Joau. Hom. xliii.

expression "when camest Thou hither?" be understood to mean "how." Their first feeling, indeed, on finding Him, appears to be that of surprise at His miraculous coming there,—but a surprise partaking more of curiosity than of that adoring wonder which would have become them.

But if He had retired from them into the mountain that they might not make Him a King, why does He now suffer Himself to be found by them without apprehension? It may be, that He had avoided the multitude of the five thousand men; but now that there were but a few of them in the synagogue at Capernaum, where they would have no such tumultuary purpose, their attention might be drawn to the spiritual nature of that His kingdom. "It was," says St. Augustin, "that by His discourses He might feed the minds of those whose bellies He had fed with the loaves. But if they cannot receive them, that what they receive not may be gathered up, that nothing be lost." These discourses, therefore, that come to us, may be considered as the Divine fragments of that spiritual feeding that remain. It may here be observed, that, as their error afterwards appears during this discourse, to consist in a carnal interpretation of the mystery of the great Sacrament of His kingdom; so is it connected with a too sensual conception of His kingdom itself previously, as partaking of temporal greatness: in both there is something too sensual in their understanding, and a consequent depreciation of its spiritual nature. But our Lord, as usual in His addresses to particular persons, answers not the words spoken, but the thoughts of the heart in them that spoke.

"Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Yet did they not see and acknowledge the miracle? it appears not.

but that their heart, even as that of the Apostles themselves, was hardened. And again ; were not these Jews condemned for seeking a sign ? was it not complained of, that without signs and wonders they would not believe ? Yet here they are reprov'd because they seek Him not on account of the miracles. Still further it may be asked, were they not desirous to make Him a King, for this very reason, that He had displayed such miraculous power ? How is it then that they are as if they saw not the miracle ? And, moreover, were not these very people, before the miracle of the loaves, following Him, as St. John says, "because they saw the miracles that He did on those that were sick" ? The fact is, it is the same state of the heart which asks for signs, and which does not attend to signs given, excepting so far as to derive benefit from them, or gratify curiosity ; but not to adore the Giver. A perfect faith requires no sign ; a less perfect feels after such sensible indications, but accepts the most trivial ; if still more imperfect, it needs greater signs : but the unbelieving heart is not benefited even by the greatest visible tokens ; being taken up by the desires of this temporal life. The whole disposition, therefore, has to be altered, in order to receive Christ crucified. For the end and object of His miracles was not the visible results in removal of diseases, or in feeding the hungry, but faith in Himself. For those objects He could attain without miracle, by His will alone. Whereas the Jews wanted to see manifestations of power, and to derive the benefit of them with no regard to the true objects of them. "Ye seek," says Augustin, "again to eat of the loaves, again to sit down, again to be filled." "Ye seek Me," he says, "for the sake of the flesh, not for the sake of the Spirit. How many are there that seek Jesus

* John vi. 2.

only for some temporal good? Scarcely at all is Jesus sought for Jesus' sake ⁶." As when He healed the paralytic, He would draw their attention to its spiritual meaning, the forgiveness of sins : so here from the visible to the unseen Bread. Yet they in both cases are offended.

Thus does He continually endeavour to draw off our thoughts from the sensible to the spiritual, from the material to the real, from the temporal to the eternal.

SECTION X

THE INCARNATION

"Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto life everlasting, which," i.e. which meat, "the Son of Man will give unto you." He that gave you bread yesterday hath a better bread to bestow upon you. "For Him hath God the Father sealed." There is therefore labour to be exercised, for man must eat bread in the sweat of his brow ; but it is for the bread which gives life, of which the other is but the shadow. "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Ye must labour for it, although God gives it ; as St. Paul says with nearly the same word ⁸, "Labour out your salvation," "because God worketh in you." "All things are full of labour," this is the ordinance both of nature and of grace. But what is the meat that endureth? "Under the figure of meat," says St. Augustin, "He

⁶ In Joan. Tr. xxv.

⁷ Isa. lv. 2.

⁸ κατεργάζεσθε, Phil. ii. 12.

speaks of Himself." "The meat that endureth," says Theophylact, "is the mystical reception of the Flesh of the Lord." It is of course in every sense Christ ; but it may be observed that although the whole of this discourse is connected with the doctrine of the Eucharist, as its centre, yet it brings in every other sense as subsidiary and subordinate, as faith and prayer, and the word of Christ ; these are all the bread that endureth ; sometimes one, and sometimes another of these is more alluded to, but under it all is the Sacrament of Christ's Body or Blood, more or less distinctly set forth ; as it was lately by miracle, so is it now by parable and precept. And further on in this discourse with less reserve. Our Lord speaks here in the future tense, because it is that which is in some sense yet to be, when that Sacrament shall be established at His death : in like manner as to the woman of Samaria He speaks in the future of the Water which He shall give, as speaking of the Spirit which was not yet given. Of Himself, He here speaks as the Son of Man ; not only as that Messiah for Whom they were seeking, but as the One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, with a secret reference to that Sacrament, by which we are made to partake of Him in Whom is life and immortality, Who thus receives us into mysterious union with that Manhood which is taken into God ; so that we are made thereby to be in Him One Bread and One Body. "The Son of Man," but differing from all other sons of men as having upon Him the seal of the Father. He designates Himself openly the Son of Man, while His Godhead was that secret which the Father would reveal unto those who noted on His Son the Father's seal. For thus He says to His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am ?" but St. Peter's answer, "Christ the

Son of the living God," was that which was made known to him of the Father in secret. "The Word of God," says Augustin, "commendeth to us His humility ; Man acknowledgeth the glory of his Lord."

But what is the meaning of the expression, "Him the Father hath sealed"? The Will which conveys the inheritance bears the seal of him that confers it. Thus Abraham is said to have had "the seal of circumcision;" thus Christians to be "sealed" by the Spirit; "He that anointed us is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of His Spirit⁹." Thus by the Mission, the Anointing, the Kingdom, the Priesthood, God hath on Christ set His seal, as Him in Whom are all the promises. The Voice from heaven, and the miraculous works, were the seal of the Father's testimony in the presence of men. Something of this kind is the sense of St. Chrysostom and St. Augustin. "Hath set His seal; that is," says the latter, "hath set on Him a peculiar mark, that He be not compared with other men. Therefore it is said of Him, 'God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows¹.' 'As the Son of Man I am as one of you; but the Father hath on Me set His seal, that I be not confounded with mankind, but that mankind through Me might be made free².'" Thus does Christ bear the Father's seal as set apart and peculiarly His own, and as "separate from sinners³." But St. Cyril and St. Gregory Nazianzen interpret it of our Lord's Divine nature, as of one substance with the Father, "being the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person⁴." As Nazianzen says, "The fountain of life

⁹ 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13.

¹ Ps. xlv. 7.

² In Joan. Tr. xxv. 11.

³ Heb. vii. 26.

⁴ Heb. i. 3.

and immortality, that expression of the archetype, that immutable seal, that image alike in all things, that definition and reason, or word of the Father." But St. Hilary rather of the Word made flesh, of Him "in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily⁵." For the seal that bears the impress is of different material to that which conveys the impression; as communicating therefore the Divine impress as it were on the Manhood, the Father's seal. He Who was God Only-Begotten, and the Son of Man only by the Sacrament of our Salvation, makes use of it to express the Father's fulness as stamped upon Himself. He wishes to show the Jews He has the power of giving the eternal meat, because He contained in Himself the fulness of God⁶.

It has been well observed (by Dr. Pusey in his admirable sermon on the Eucharist) that "the whole of this discourse circleth round this gift of life." In this respect it may be compared with that of the previous chapter, where *truth* is throughout the subject, as of the Father bearing witness; and with the Eucharistic discourse at the Last Supper, which in the same manner soundeth throughout of *love*.

His object through the whole of this discourse is to kindle in them a desire for that life. He draws them on by little and little, like the woman of Samaria, from things carnal to those Divine realities of which they speak: and as in that case His endeavour throughout was to raise in her a desire to receive in order that He might give; so here He bids them labour for that spiritual good which He has to bestow. To the Samaritan woman, "If thou hadst known, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would give thee living water;" so now, "Seek for

⁵ Col. ii. 9.

⁶ De Trin. lib. viii. 44.

that Heavenly Bread which the Son of Man will give you." But in both cases He is understood in a low and earthly sense.

"*They said therefore unto Him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God?*" Taking up our Lord's expression of "Labour not," or "work not for the meat that perisheth," they would say, What is this work that you speak of in the works of God for the meat that endureth? "*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye may believe on Him Whom He hath sent.*" They in working contemplate some great work, stretching beyond their measure, as their fathers of old, to whom Moses said, "It is not far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us? but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart:" speaking as St. Paul says of "the righteousness which is of faith". They ask what work they shall do; and our Lord's reply intimates that the work itself which they have to do—is to believe. Their work is faith. "There are works," says St. Augustin on this place, "which appear good without faith in Christ; but they are not good, for they have not reference to that end by which they are rendered good. Therefore He was unwilling to distinguish faith from work, but said that faith itself is that work."

"*They said therefore unto Him, What sign,*" or what miracle, "*then showest Thou, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness; as it is written, Bread from heaven He gave them to eat.*" "He gave them food from

⁷ Deut. xxx. 11—14; Rom. x. 6—8.

heaven, so man did eat angels' food⁸." If Moses were but a type of the Messiah, surely from the Messiah Himself we may expect some great miracle from heaven worthy to sustain a kingdom. The thought of the manna was suggested by some latent association with the miracle of the bread in the wilderness which had just taken place, while it proves that their hearts were too much hardened to have observed therein the works of His Almighty hand. Like the Jews on other occasions, they ask for a sign; and it is remarkable that now and at all times they seem to have caught at the fulfilment of prophecy, in some sense correctly, only that they interpreted it after a carnal manner. Like Herod in his apprehension of one coming with mighty power from the dead; like Caiaphas prophesying in a sense he knew not; so was it now true that the great characteristic of the Messiah's kingdom would be His giving them food from heaven; which the manna and the late miracle of the loaves faintly prefigured. Some Divine food that should become conformable to every need of man, adapting itself to every spiritual want: for the history itself of what occurred in the wilderness was rightly understood as prophetic. "Thou feddest Thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste⁹."

St. Chrysostom supposes them still bent on obtaining bread for their selfish appetite: Cornelius a Lapide, that some more bold and unbelieving among them thus asked; as if they had said, Moses sustained six hundred thousand in the wilderness, and that for forty years, and with manna or sweet bread from heaven; yet your miracle

⁸ Ps. lxxviii. 25.

⁹ Wisdom xvi. 20.

yesterday was not equal to this, though your pretensions are so much greater than those of Moses. Thus also St. Cyril. In comparing them, says St. Augustin, they thought what Jesus had done was inferior to that miracle of Moses. "Thou speakest of the bread that perisheth not: yet Thou doest not such works as Moses. It was not barley loaves that he gave, but manna from heaven¹."

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." That bread from heaven, of which the Psalmist, by the Holy Spirit speaks in prophecy, is not the manna which Moses gave them in the wilderness, but something which is infinitely better, the bread of God: for every gift that cometh from above is good and perfect. Or, it may be understood, it was not Moses, but My Father that gave you the manna; yet He gave you that only as the sign of the true bread, which He gives. Moses was but the representative of the true lawgiver, which is God: the bread therefore which he gave was but the representative of the true bread which God gives. It was not the true bread; it was not true life which he gave; it was not truly "bread from heaven." But, as St. Chrysostom says, as we speak of the birds of heaven, and thunder from heaven, when the sky only, or the air above, is meant; and, we may add, as we speak of the dews and rains from heaven; so was it with the manna from above: not that it came from that heaven where God is, from Whom cometh every perfect gift, with Whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. "The bread of eternal life of which I spake was signified," says Augustin, "by the manna. All these were My signs: My signs

¹ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 12.

ye loved ; but Me Who am signified by those signs ye despise. It is not Moses that gave you the bread from heaven, but My Father ; yet the bread which He gives as His own is not the manna, but that of which the manna was the sign²."

"*For the bread of God is He that cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world:*"—not to the Jews only, as the manna, but to all mankind. Not He that hath come down only, but He Who cometh, and will continue to come to feed His people with His Body that giveth life. Theophylact supposes, that the manna in the very name was a type of Christ. "For manna means literally, What is this? The Son of God made man is, in an especial manner, this mysterious manna which we ask about, saying, What is this? How can the Son of God be the Son of Man³." And, of course, no less forcibly does it apply also to the Eucharist, What is this? Its name is mystery.

"*They said therefore unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*" Like the Samaritan woman again, when she answered, "Give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw," perceiving, from His words, that He spake of some great gift ; and supposing, as St. Cyril, Augustin, and Chrysostom understand it, that our Lord spake of bread such as they wanted, not of that spiritual bread which He intended. As if divinely overruled to make this prayer, and heard and answered beyond their thought ; while they meant it in weakness and evil, as desiring bread, He answers them according to His mercies, and "evermore" gives them "this bread."

"*Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of life.*" Christ here speaks of Himself as already that Bread before the

² In Joan. Tr. xxv. 13.

³ Aur. Cat.

Eucharist was appointed; preparing them by little and little for that faith and spiritual reception, without which even that Bread would avail them not. For, although these words, "I am the bread of life," are afterwards distinctly connected with our Lord's body in the Sacrament, yet there seems some doubt, whether they are not now at first used in a less strict sense, with respect to faith in Him. Our Lord had told the Jews to labour for that meat which perisheth not, which they rightly understood Him to mean, to work the work of God: and this work He explained to be, to believe in Him whom God hath sent, i. e. faith in the Incarnation, such is the meat that endureth. The bread of life, therefore, in this place, may refer back to that expression, as well as to the subject that after ensues. And, moreover, if we take the entire sentence in this place, it seems to explain itself as signifying faith and obedience in Christ; for our Lord adds, that he that cometh unto Him shall never hunger; and therefore the coming to Him, which expression seems here the counterpart and equivalent to believing in Him, is to eat of this bread of life. And St. Augustin in this place, when the Jews first murmured at the expression, thus explains it: "The Lord being about to give the Holy Spirit, spoke of Himself as the bread that came down from heaven, exhorting us to believe in Him. For to believe in Him is to eat of the living bread. He that believeth eateth, is filled invisibly, invisibly is born again⁴." St. Chrysostom also thinks, that our Lord does not in these words speak of the Eucharist. "He first speaks of His Divinity, saying, I am the bread of life. This is not spoken of His body: for of that He speaks towards the end of this discourse, where He says, The bread which I

⁴ In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 1.

will give you is My flesh : but thus far He speaks of His Divinity. The flesh, there spoken of, is bread by virtue of the Word. Here this becomes heavenly bread on account of the Spirit⁵." That is to say, St. Chrysostom supposes it to be here used in the more extensive sense, and not limited to that reference to His Body. Yet it is to be observed, that a little further on in this discourse, when our Lord repeats these words, "I am the bread of life, which came down from heaven," He adds to the expression, "and the bread which I will give is My flesh;" which clearly connects the former mention of bread with the latter of flesh. And St. Chrysostom thus explains it in that passage,—speaking of the bread which cometh down from heaven, of which he that eateth shall never die,—he says, "The bread in this place He calls saving dogmas, or faith in Him, or His own Body⁶."

That later in this chapter, i. e. from the fifty-first verse, it is the Sacrament of our Lord's body that is spoken of, there can be no question; but previously the expressions do seem to apply to doctrine, to faith, and obedience; this is evident from the sacred context, and from the expositions of the Fathers, whose testimony is both in itself most competent, and from circumstances the most unbiassed. But it is not to be supposed from this, that they are thus to be explained exclusively, and that they do not contain also a covert reference to a deeper subject throughout the whole of this discourse. For the subject of the Incarnation, and the Eucharist as connected with it, is the one pervading topic of the whole of the sixth chapter of St. John throughout. And it is a consideration of great importance, that illiterate persons, educated in the ordinances of the Church, do naturally read or hear this

⁵ In Joan. Hom. xlv. 2.

⁶ In Joan. Hom. xlvi. 1.

chapter as Eucharistic or Sacramental, and so of themselves interpret and apply it without any explanation, clue, or comment being given them. Understanding thereby first, the various senses of believing, and from thence more strictly that Sacrament; not being aware of any controversy or question respecting it. Such, the voice of Christ's little ones who are taught of God, in accordance with the Church of all ages, is the strongest confirmation of the truth. Another reason may be alleged, that the Jews themselves, who heard our Lord speak of Himself as the bread from heaven, before He had spoken of His flesh, understood the expression of His Body; nor were they reprov'd for doing so. Notwithstanding the slowness of their spiritual perception, on account of unbelief, yet it may be observed, that the Jews were, in some sense, ready to comprehend our Lord's words rightly with great seeming understanding in their literal sense; as when they perceived at once that He made Himself equal with God in saying, "Before Abraham was, I am⁷;" that in forgiving sins, He exercised an attribute, which belonged to God only. So now they well apprehend, that it was His body of which He spake, and not merely of the descending and indwelling Spirit; which indeed might be well understood as the bread of life; but it was evident to them, from our Lord's expressions, or manner of speaking, that He was alluding to something beside this, with a peculiar reference to His Body: whereas, they conceived that He was born like themselves of human parents, and those dwelling among them; and this was the occasion of their murmurings.

Further, it may be added, that a new force in this

⁷ John viii. 58. Luke v. 21.

connexion of bread and flesh, so as to render them in some sense corresponding terms, would be seen when the allusion to partaking of a sacrifice, and of a victim slain, was understood to be contained in it: for as this mention of living bread is combined with that of flesh that gives life in this discourse, and as the one passes imperceptibly into the other, and becomes inseparably combined with it; so it would be remembered, that in the law the sacrificial oblations were of two kinds, they were either made of flour, or were of the flesh, i. e. of a victim: both were combined in those typical ordinances which set forth those mysterious good things to come; both were partaken of by the priests; both were fulfilled afterwards in the expression applied by our Lord to bread, "This is My body." As, moreover, our Lord's words have usually a reference to His works, and are to be interpreted in conjunction with them: and as in speaking to us He always supposes a previous knowledge on our part from the institutions with which by nature or grace He has surrounded us; and as to us Christians such a meaning in the words is too obvious to be of itself worth stating; we may therefore safely conclude that such a meaning was intended. For as our Lord here speaks of Himself as bread coming down from heaven, and as He has given Himself unto us in Sacramental bread, it is impossible to conceive but that there is in this a latent connexion with that Sacrament, even where He is leading them on by figures more and more, till He comes to the distinct enunciation of that mystery.

Now "the bread from heaven" of course implies the Spirit and the Godhead as descending from above, but afterwards more distinctly, the Godhead in conjunction with the Manhood. It is the Word made flesh; it is

indeed, as Leontius says, "The Word of God that nourisheth the soul⁸." And thus St. Cyril takes it,—that it is our Lord's Divinity, in conjunction with His Manhood, which is this Bread of life,—which he sets forth as that mysterious truth lying under the whole. It is the Godhead thus united with it, that renders our human nature capable of the enjoyment of God and immortality, the true end and object of our being; so that thus being created anew in the likeness of God it is "satisfied" with it, as here expressed by, "shall never hunger," and "never thirst." From hence it may be observed throughout this discourse, how many great and essential doctrines are connected with the doctrine of the Eucharist, and meet together in it as their common centre:—that of our Lord's Divinity; of His coming down from heaven; of His ascending up to heaven; of the Father drawing us unto Him; of His raising our bodies at the last day. But the Eucharist itself He proceeds gradually to introduce; from the bread which they desired, from the manna, from the bread of life, He inculcates belief in Himself, coming to Him, and receiving His Word, and then at length some mysterious union with Him, till at last He distinctly produces the partaking of His own flesh.

St. Cyril of this expression, "I am the bread of life," says, "With these words, He intimates the life and the grace of His most holy body, by which that which peculiarly belongs to the Only-begotten, that is life, both enters in and abides." "For the body of Christ," he says, "giveth life, and bringeth back to incorruption by a participation of itself." Add to which, that the expression, "the bread of life," seems to allude to the tree of life, which St. Irenæus⁹ and others consider to be a type of

⁸ Maldon. ad loc.

⁹ Lib. v. c. 2.

the Eucharist. Again, the expression, "I am that bread of life," afterwards occurs with an apparent reference to the manna there spoken of; which is always understood to be a figure of the Sacrament, on which account it is called "angels' food."

"I am the bread of life;" "*he that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.*" To come therefore unto Christ, and to believe on Him are the same. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come¹⁰." It is the water flowing from the smitten Rock in the wilderness; it is the water "proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb¹;" the Godhead and the manhood in Christ crucified. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," because they shall be with the Lamb². Yet in another place it is said of Wisdom, "They that eat me shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty³." In the one sense, "they shall neither hunger nor thirst" implies, they shall be free from unsatisfied desire which is painful, the condition of our fallen nature; in the latter our restored nature shall obtain the object of its desires, on which it shall feed for ever, and find fresh source of gratification; they shall "hunger and thirst after righteousness, and be filled;" they "shall drink of Thy pleasures as of a river;" infinite desire deriving infinite fulfilment from an infinite object, on which it is exercised. "By both these expressions," says St. Augustin, "'shall never hunger, and shall never thirst,' is signified that eternal satiety where there is no want." "Bread from heaven ye desire; ye have it before you; but ye eat it not⁴."

¹⁰ Rev. xxii. 17. ¹ See The Nativity, p. 356. ² Rev. vii. 16.

³ Ecclus. xxiv. 21

⁴ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 14.

“But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me, and believe not.” This expression, “I said unto you,” may allude to what our Lord had stated, a little while before, when He said, “Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles.” Or, as St. Chrysostom supposes, at some time which is not distinctly specified. Or, it may refer to the whole tenor of our Lord’s discourses with them, which were to show, that notwithstanding all the testimonies which bore witness to Him, they were still unbelieving. Their rejection of His salvation was now coming out strong and distinct. And as the righteousness which is of faith is sometimes shown in contrast with the disobedience of our first parents; so this unbelief of the Jews grows from the same parent stock, the rejection of God. When God said, Thou shalt not eat, the serpent said, Why may ye not? Ye shall not die, but shall be as gods; and man obeyed the serpent: now God commands us, saying, Eat, and ye shall live, and be as the sons of God; but man is unwilling to obey God. Yet not so with all, “there shall be a remnant,” as it is added.

“Every thing that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.” The expression is “every thing,” in the neuter gender, as also afterwards; which is more comprehensive and expressive. But how is this connected with the preceding? “But think not,” says Augustin, “that your unbelief shall make the faith of God without effect.” Or, it may be, to believe in Me is the best gift that cometh from God, and He must work in you this change. The expression is afterwards frequently referred to in this chapter, as in verses 40, 44, 45, and 65; much is said in fuller explanation of it; it is authoritatively pronounced, repeated, variously expounded, and again recurred to with emphasis.

“And him that cometh unto Me I will not cast out.” “He that cometh unto Me,” that is, he that cometh to the knowledge of God in Christ, receiving Him as God, obeying Him, and resting in Him, and worshipping Him: as in that other saying, *“Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* This giving of the Father, and coming unto Christ, so as to be indissolubly united to Him, are all expressed in another place in a different manner, but to the same effect, *“My sheep hear My voice, and follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My Father’s hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all.”*—“Will not cast him out” either from My Church on earth or My kingdom in heaven. It is usually taken of the final kingdom: and may be an allusion to that feast where the guest that had not on the wedding garment is “cast out.” Maldonatus takes it of the kingdom which now is; but this would, in fact, include also the other sense: for him whom Christ now hears, and receives, and gives power to do His will, and to persevere, He shall not finally reject. “What is that inner place,” says St. Augustin, “from which there is no going out? O great Sanctuary, O sweet secret chamber, where there is no weariness, no bitterness of evil thoughts, no interruption of trials and griefs. Is it not that secret place into which that good and faithful servant shall enter, to whom it shall be said, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?”

“For I came down from heaven, not that I might do Mine own will,”—in the way that Adam and the children of Adam have pursued their own will, being another

⁵ John x. 27—29.

⁶ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 14.

will from that of the most Holy God,—“*but the will of Him that sent Me.*” “By this expression of being ‘sent,’ our Lord always signifieth,” says St. Cyril, “His incarnation, and nothing else⁷ ;”—which is so peculiarly the subject of this discourse. And thus is His Incarnation and Sacrifice expressed in that exquisite language of the Psalm, “In the volume of the book it is written of Me, that I should fulfil Thy will, O My God. I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within My heart⁸.” In like manner is it here, “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will.” And thus did he at last perfectly subject the human will to the Divine, as when He said at His Passion, “Not My will, but Thine be done.” And this is the reason why He will not cast out him that comes to Him, because He hath come down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of His Father. For it is by pride, as St. Augustin explains it, it is by doing their own will, that men are cast out. By pride man hath fallen, and is at enmity with God; by the humiliation of the Son of Man shall he be “restored.” And it is therefore by humility, says the same writer, that men enter the kingdom, as is expressed in numerous places, such as, “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;” and “it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish⁹.” “Adam,” he says, “wished to live by his own will, and fell through him who before had fallen through pride, and who gave him to drink the cup of pride. But with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light¹.” But others² connect it differently with the

⁷ In Joan. lib. iv. 3.

⁸ Ps. xl. 10.

⁹ Matt. xviii. 4. 14.

¹ In Joan. Tr. xxv. 16. 19.

² See Cor. a Lap. and Maldonatus.

former verse, "I will not cast him out;" for this reason, that I have come down from heaven, to fulfil this which is My Father's will in sending Me, viz. that I might receive unto Myself those whom He hath given Me, and cast out, or lose, none of them. But St. Cyril supposes, that our Lord's expression is also intended as a reproof of the Jews, as ever pursuing their own will in utter disregard of God. Every sense may be contained in this reflection,—that they that lose their own will in the will of God, and lose themselves in Him, shall be as Christ, Who doeth not His own will; they in Christ shall be saved; they shall be conformed to that inscrutable will of God, which is our salvation.

"And this is the will of the Father which hath sent Me, that of everything which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Not "every one," but in the neuter, "everything," as before in verse 37, implying universality, as it is often spoken of Christ's dominion, "every knee" shall bow to Him, "every eye" shall see Him, "all nations" shall do Him service. "I have given Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance." The reason, therefore, why any one believes is, because of that gift which the Father hath given to Christ; being drawn unto Him by His own sweet love constraining: for "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy^s." But as the terms, the "elect," "called," "regenerate," "Sons of God," "saved," "the Church," "the kingdom of heaven," and the like are used in two senses; so also is the expression of being "given" unto Christ by the Father: for in one sense it is used only of those who are outwardly brought into His Church visible; thus at

^s Eph. i. 4.

last our Lord says of the twelve, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition⁴." But in the higher sense, they that are given of the Father are those, of which number not one is lost, of whom Christ says, "No one shall pluck them out of My hand;" "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out:" for such are they that finally persevere, being given unto Christ according to that secret predestination of the Father, whose ways are past finding out, and which His purpose is altogether inscrutable by men. The former are they which are contained in that net which is broken on account of the unnumbered multitude of the fishes, of which some are not brought to the shore; but the latter are of that hidden net which is not broken, notwithstanding the multitude of fishes; which is thrown on the right side by the command of God, and wherein the fish are all numbered, all "great, all brought to shore⁵."

"And this is the will of Him that hath sent Me, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have eternal life; and I will raise Him up at the last day." "That beholdeth the Son"—not merely that seeth Him with the bodily eyes, but beholdeth Him with the eyes of the understanding (not *ἑώρακε*, as v. 46, not *βλέπων*, but *θεωρῶν*). It is a word peculiarly applied to the apprehension of things Divine.

Four times in the course of a few verses does the sentence terminate with the same words repeated, "I will raise him at the last day." Although our Lord often speaks of His giving everlasting life, and of our eternal life being in Him, yet this is peculiar to this chapter. Because the eating of that spiritual bread, is especially

⁴ John xvii. 12.

⁵ See Resurrection, pp. 283. 287.

connected with life and resurrection. This is peculiarly the resurrection of the just, as it is said, "They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead." The repetition of the same expressions in this discourse gives it a very peculiar force and character, putting out certain doctrines in a strong relief, after the manner of that Evangelist, whose peculiar office it is to bear witness: and all those doctrines which have such marked prominence in this chapter, are but the manifold phases or necessary developments of the Incarnation.

SECTION XI

MURMURINGS OF THE JEWS

"The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven." They murmured, as their fathers had done of old in the wilderness, not content with that promised land which was before them, but desiring more provisions by the way: as if these murmurings were, as St. Cyril says, an inheritance derived from them of old. But there the cause of their murmurings was, because they had not the meat which they desired; here, their murmuring is at hearing of spiritual truths: and in both of these together there may be contained some great principle in their moral history, in that they who murmur at things temporal being withholden from them, will carry on their murmurings to things Divine. To seek things carnal will be to murmur at the absence of them; to dislike things heavenly, will be to be provoked and irritated at the presence of them. And the two feelings have a secret connexion, for

heavenly truths impair the comforts of earth. But St. Chrysostom takes their murmuring to be that of disappointment at being frustrated in their expectation of a bodily feast; in which case it would be the very same which they inherited from their fathers, disappointed because they found not meat for their lusts: for, as he observes, when fed and satiated with the loaves, they were ready to acknowledge Him as the Prophet which was to come. Such a murmuring at God will at all times be a sinful temptation, as it was to those Israelites in the wilderness: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer⁶." Yet the dislike to spiritual truths seems to have a deeper cause. They had no spiritual hunger for that bread. "For that bread," says St. Augustin, "requires the hunger of the inner man." Blessed are they, he adds, who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. But, as the Apostle Paul says, Our righteousness is Christ⁷. But they, filled and satisfied with their own righteousness, had no hunger for the righteousness which is from above. For, "going about to establish their own righteousness, they submitted not themselves unto the righteousness of God⁸."

"And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How, therefore, saith He, I came down from Heaven?" Not the calling Himself Bread, but the coming down from Heaven, it appears from this expression, offended them. But St. Augustin and Theophylact speak of it as if it was the term Bread, the spiritual Bread, when they looked for that which was sensible, which was the cause of offence; probably both

⁶ 1 Cor. x. 10.

⁷ Ibid. i. 30.

⁸ Rom. x. 3. In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 1.

together. We have on two occasions at Nazareth the same contemptuous reflections with reference to His parentage, as "the son of Joseph," whose "mother is called Mary," and to His brethren and sisters⁹, which hardened them against believing in His wisdom and mighty works: but here it has a particular relation to His parents, because it was the secret of His birth that offended them, inasmuch as He spoke of Himself as having come down from heaven. They speak of knowing His reputed parents as men of Capernaum, which was contiguous to Nazareth; and indeed we more than once read of our Lord's mother and brethren being at Capernaum; and therefore they were probably known to them, for they would, of course, have drawn attention in that town; or, perhaps, some of these that spoke were from Nazareth itself. Yet the words do not necessarily imply personal knowledge, but only that His parents were known among them generally as Jews or men of Galilee. How can He be come from heaven, who was born, like ourselves, from earthly parents, and that too in this our own country? The secret of our Lord's birth of a Virgin was, we know, long withheld from the knowledge of the Jews. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, Origen, and Chrysostom, mention the supposition that it was designedly kept back from the knowledge of evil spirits. "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." It also served providentially, in the Divine economy, for exercising the faith of the Jews; inasmuch as they who were spiritually-minded, came to that knowledge with the light vouchsafed to their hearts from above, and thus approved themselves worthy of the mysteries of God. And hence our Lord does not now in any way correct that their error

⁹ See p. 313. See The Nativity, p. 387.

respecting His birth; for the knowledge of that His marvellous generation was, as St. Chrysostom here observes, too high for their present weakness.

Upon these their murmurings, our Lord again returns to the expression He had previously introduced; for a little before, after saying, "Ye also have seen Me, and believe not," He added, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." In like manner He now resumes that declaration, to which He again and again returns, that it must be the especial gift of the Father that they should think otherwise. "*Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves; no one can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*" In all the passages of this kind the difficulty arises from this, that man's mode of moral dealing is different to that which is Divine; for it appears contrary to what we should expect, that the inducement to come to Christ, should be, that no one can do so except the Father draw him. Yet this is the Divine invitation,—an invitation which seems at first rather to repel than attract: but it is not so; such a consideration as this doctrine contains turns the heart to God, and awakens faith, and love, and fear; without which feelings softening the soul, it cannot receive the Word. The countenance, when turned to God, is enlightened; not so when it turns to other objects: the back is then turned to God; it sees His light, but is not itself enlightened. The strongest appeal to love is, that God doth move the affections; the strongest appeal to fear is, that God doth harden the heart. "He upbraids them not," says Cornelius a Lapide, "but prefers more sweetly and divinely to answer them, that no one could believe in Him, unless it be given him of the Father; that they

who believed might not contend against others who did not; and they who were unbelieving might acknowledge that they were wanting in the Divine light, and with humble prayer might seek it of God and Christ." Supposing, as this writer does, that the "murmuring among themselves" implied a contest between them, from some who believed in Him and others who did not. "Take the doctrine as it is given thee," says Augustin; "and if thou art not drawn, pray that thou mayest be." St. Chrysostom, on this passage, speaks of man's free will and free agency, as guarding against the Manicheans; St. Augustin, of the necessity of Divine grace, as warning against the Pelagians: we, in the bosom of the Church which they have protected, may be instructed by both without controversy. If the truth of the Church is, as Tertullian says, situated between opposing heresies, as Christ crucified between two thieves, yet we, without looking to the right hand or to the left, may embrace and cling to Christ crucified.

And how beautifully expressive, in this sense and application, is the word "*draw*" him, as implying forcible compulsion and constraint; but the sweet compulsion, the endearing constraint of love attracting. "The love of Christ constraineth us¹," says St. Paul. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me²." It is the same word. Again, in the Prophet, "They knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love³." How deeply significative is the term, in all these applications, of the truth which lies between the two errors; for, while it excludes that stern necessity which destroys free will, it yet implies great need of help. A dead body we should not "draw," but

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14.

² John xii. 32.

³ Hosea xi. 4.

carry; one in perfect health and strength we should not "draw," but lead; but one weak and sick we should "draw." We should "draw" one free to come, but held back by the cords of the world, the flesh, and the devil. In the words of the philosophizing Ammonius, quoted by Maldonatus, "This saying destroys not in us the freedom of the will, but shows that we are in need of assistance; for drawing implies not unwillingness, but the need of much support." "There is no unwillingness," says St. Augustin, "in thus being drawn: it is not only by the will, but by the delight of the soul." "Delight thou in the Lord, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire." "There is a delight of the heart, to which pleasant is that bread from heaven. If, moreover, the poet might say,

. . . 'trahit sua quemque voluptas';

that not necessity, but pleasure; not obligation, but delight, draws us; how much more strongly may we say that a man is drawn unto Christ, when his delight is in truth, in blessedness, in righteousness, in everlasting life; all which Christ is! Give me one that loves, that desires and hungers, as feeling himself in solitude and exile, thirsting for and longing after that fountain of his eternal country; and such a one will understand what I say." "By the chain of the heart he is drawn." "What doth the soul more strongly desire than truth? What doth she hunger and thirst after more than wisdom and righteousness?" To hunger and thirst after God is to be drawn to the living fountain of waters.

It may here be observed, that it is said of him who cometh unto Christ, that He will raise him up at the last day. It had before been said, "He that cometh unto Me

† Vir. Ecl. ii.

§ In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 4, 5.

shall never hunger ;” or, in other words, he shall eat of that bread of life of which our Lord was then speaking. And therefore the eating of the bread of life seems to be all one in its effect with being raised up by Christ at the last day. And, again, it may be noticed, in that former instance, where the term “cometh unto Me” is used, in the corresponding clause of the sentence it is “he that believeth on Me ;” and therefore, coming to Christ, and believing on Him, are terms that imply the same. And thus St. Augustin explains the expression of “coming to Christ,” that it is not by walking or change of place, that we run to Him ; not by the movement of the body, but by the will of the heart, is He approached. Thus, when the woman touched the hem of His garment, it was by faith that she touched Him more than the crowd around Him : thus, after He had ascended to the Father, we, with Mary Magdalene, by faith may touch Him ⁶.

“*It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.*” The Law given by the disposition of angels or of men, spoke in positive precepts and carnal ordinances, that all could understand and obey ; but the Prophets, as they came to disclose more clearly the nature of Christ’s kingdom, intimated this spiritual discernment which God should give, by which alone that kingdom would be entered, saying, “All thy children shall be taught of God ; and great shall be the peace of thy children ⁷.” And, “I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts :” and “they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them ¹ :” the passage referred to by St. Paul as the very characteristic of the new covenant ². Again, in another Prophet,

⁶ In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 3.

⁷ Isa. liv. 13.

¹ Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

² Heb. viii. 10 ; x. 16.

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh³.” And if foretold by Prophets, its fulfilment is testified by Apostles: as St. Paul says, “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit⁴.” And St. John, “Ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth⁵.” They shall be “all taught of God;” that is, as St. Augustin explains it, all who shall belong to that kingdom: and Theophylact, “All who shall desire it.” All the disciples, all who were with Christ in the boat, when He spoke in parables, had them explained by Christ; and to them He said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see;” and, “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: but to others in parables:” they that were on the shore understood them not; a figure on which Origen and St. Hilary enlarge. But there it might be said, in one sense, that “all” were taught of God, for the multitudes were instructed by Christ, as well as the Apostles: but in the higher sense of Divine teaching, as illuminating the will and understanding, it was confined to the faithful disciples: and this appears to be the meaning here. So great is the excellency of faith, says St. Chrysostom, that it can only be given by God Himself. Indeed, even Aristotle, in his Treatise on Morals, had said, that if all good things come from the Divinity, much more is it to be supposed that the best of all things, which is goodness itself, should be His gift. Nor is it less the gift of God, he adds, because He makes efforts, on the part of man, needful in the attainment of it. So philosophy itself divined.

“*Every one therefore that hath heard, and hath learned*

³ Joel ii. 28.

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

⁵ 1 John ii. 27.

of the Father, cometh unto Me. Not that any one hath seen the Father, save He which is of God; He hath seen the Father." The Son hath seen Him, being of one substance with the Father in unspeakable union, and "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see⁶." For "no man can see God and live." Moses saw Him, but it was only through the creature, or in Christ⁷. "As being consubstantial with the Father," says St. Cyril, "He seeth Him from whence He is." And Euthymius, "As being of the same nature, substance, knowledge, and being in the bosom of the Father⁸." And Theodoret, "If the Son alone seeth the Father, He is external to all, and over all, and above all." But Scripture is itself the best commentary on itself: "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only-Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him:" and to Philip at last, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father⁹." "God is visible," says Quesnel, "only to the invisible eyes of the heart. Christ, by the prerogative of His eternal birth, is the witness and channel of all truth, and the source from whence all our knowledge of God is derived."

But although said properly, and in one sense exclusively of Christ, that He hath seen the Father; yet, in a subordinate and secondary sense, it may be said of every one that is born of God; even in like manner as such are sons of God, though not in the same sense that Christ is. And thus St. Chrysostom takes it, that although it be the primary meaning, yet that they might say, We are all from God, and that which belongs peculiarly to the Son

⁶ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

⁸ Cor. a Lap.

⁷ See The Nativity, p. 200.

⁹ John i. 18; xiv. 9.

He forbears to mention to them. But the expression is here introduced to explain or qualify the former part of the sentence : that although every one that cometh unto Me must have heard and been taught by the Father, yet this hearing and teaching of which I speak is not as he would learn of a human teacher, whom he hears and sees ; but is, by the Divine inspiration, opening the eyes of the heart to see. For "no one hath seen the Father." "Beyond the reach of the bodily senses," says Augustin, "is this school, in which the Father is heard, and men taught to come to the Son. Here we have not to do with the carnal ear, but the ear of the heart ; for here is the Son Himself, the Word by which the Father teacheth, and together with Him the Holy Spirit ; the operations of the Three Persons being inseparable from each other¹." And in another place, "He that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto Christ : for Christ is the Word of the Father, the Word made Flesh that dwelleth in us²."

He that heareth of the Father cometh unto the Son ; in most strong and striking relief does this truth stand forth on the very history of the Gospels : three times was the voice of the Father heard from heaven declaring the Son, in His priestly, in His prophetic, in His kingly office. The voice thus heard by obedient disciples, and by none else but them, was as a symbol of that internal voice by which the Father speaks to the heart within, revealing His Son. And indeed with a full correspondence in both respects to both parts of this subject, our Lord says previously, "that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life ;" and afterwards, "Every one that hath heard and learned of the

¹ Aur. Cat.

² In Joan. Tr. xxvi.

Father, cometh unto Me." So was it then in all that dispensation; they heard the Father's voice bearing witness; they beheld the Son of Man.

SECTION XII

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

AND now, after thus parenthetically stating the reasons why they did not come to Him, and the Divine weight of His own testimonies, our Lord returns to the great scope and object both of the present discourse and the previous miracle, the mysterious Bread which He is about to give to the world; repeating His solemn assertion, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that Bread of life.*" He had before said, "I am the Bread of life," and "he that cometh unto Me shall never hunger;" but now in fuller and more open declaration He pronounces Himself not by a figurative and secondary mode of speech the Bread of life, but the Bread in some high and mysterious sense of which they had been speaking, which He now proceeds to connect with His own Body, taking up the expression of the Jews, who had wanted Him to show them some sign like the manna in the wilderness. "*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*" "That a man may not die;" stating the reason why it was sent from heaven: this bread hath descended in order that whosoever eats of it may not die. Or rather it seems to mean, in opposi-

tion to the manna which did not give eternal life, that this does give it, of which man may eat so as not to die.

If strictly and logically considered, there is great difficulty in this statement, that they who did eat of that manna in the wilderness are dead, but they who eat of this the true Bread, shall live for ever. For it cannot mean that they who did eat of that manna are spiritually dead in eternal death. If again it merely means dead by that natural death which all die, that sleep, as it is called in Scripture, or being gathered to their fathers; the same death would occur to those who spiritually and sacramentally and savingly eat of the true Bread from heaven: so that in this respect both cases would be alike, and there would be no difference or opposition. But the meaning is, that manna, though called Bread from heaven, gave support to their bodies only, and that but for a time; it gave not immortality; nor was it in any way professed or declared that it should do more. They that did eat of that manna, all died with the spiritual death of the soul as far as that manna was concerned: that is, that the manna saved them not; if they were saved, it was by some other means, by faith in Christ, the spiritual Rock that followed them. But it is different with that living Bread of which I speak, for those that partake of this I will raise up again at the last day: it gives life and immortality; it saves: if any perish who partake of it, it is in spite of that Bread and for other causes. The manna was a symbol of the true Bread in sustaining life, in being miraculously given, and from above; but it was but the shadow compared with the substance: and so was that life which it gave no more than a shadow of the true life which is in God. The fact is that our Lord speaks of life and of death in two senses in the same sentence,

temporal and eternal, that of the body and that of the soul. Many are the instances in which our Lord thus uses the same expressions differently at the same time, combining the two meanings. As when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." By which mode of speaking He would draw our attention to the strict analogy there exists in things material and spiritual; it is clothing His expressions as it were in a parable. Thus when He said a week before the Transfiguration, "There are some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom," there is great ambiguity and difficulty in the words; for although it signified the beholding His kingdom manifested in the glory of that Transfiguration, and might have been further fulfilled in St. John, who survived till His Lord's coming in the destruction of Jerusalem; yet it is obvious that other deeper senses were also included in it. To understand which things, Origen would say that we must knock at the door by prayer; St. Augustin, that the Spirit will teach according to our measure. But it is one characteristic of our Lord's teaching³.

But in considering this subject throughout, we must be on our guard against controversial writers, and have recourse to the usual sense and analogy of Scripture itself, and to the opinion of early writers who knew not of controversies on this subject. For some of late have been studious in explaining away the meaning of this chapter; among Protestants from an undue apprehension that its sacramental interpretation, if allowed, would countenance the Roman doctrine of the Eucharist; and on the other hand, some Roman Catholic writers would explain it away from an apprehension that its sacramental interpretation

³ See Study of Gospels, Part iii.

would make it incumbent on all to receive the Communion in both kinds. Among the former is even our own Bishop Taylor, who (although entertaining the highest sense of the real presence) adduces this passage as a proof that it cannot be sacramental manducation here intended, for in that some may eat unworthily as well as of the manna in the wilderness; but that here it must signify that spiritual partaking that cannot be done unworthily. From which he infers "There is something which Christ hath promised us, which whosoever receives, he receives life and not death, but this is not the Sacrament; for of them that communicate some receive to life, and some to death." Yet it surely needs but little knowledge of Scripture, to see that it implies spiritual understanding, and its words are to be taken as fulfilled in truth; that where it speaks of eating that Bread in the holy Eucharist it means worthily, and according to the sense and fulness of Divine things. All the promises to faith and Baptism must thus be taken. Even that spiritual manducation without the Sacrament of which that writer would here interpret it, although it might be in faith and worthily, yet would not be unto life, without final perseverance. Of this eating indeed, whereby a man shall not die, St. Augustin says, "But this is what appertains to the virtue of the Sacrament, not to the visible Sacrament; he who eateth within, not without; who eateth with the heart, not who presseth with the teeth." "How many," he says, "are there who receive of the altar, and by receiving die! Whence the Apostle says, 'He eateth and drinketh damnation unto himself⁵.'" But in all this St. Augustin does of course suppose worthy partaking in faith, not without, but in the blessed Eucharist. Yet in reading his

⁴ On the Real Presence, § iii. 6.

⁵ In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 1.

Commentary on this subject some caution is necessary, to avoid a confusion between the type and antitype; as he speaks of both the manna and the Bread of the Eucharist as signs of that inward communion with Christ's Passion; both sacramental, alike in the signs, but differing in the thing signified: as both being, as St. Paul says, "spiritual meat;" both he considers might have been partaken of worthily, and unto life or unto death. Thus both St. Augustin and Bishop Taylor would make little or no difference between the manna and the Sacramental elements; the one setting the manna too high, the other the Eucharist too low in this passage, as means of spiritual life. Whereas it is evident that our Lord is here making the greatest distinction between the Bread He shall give, i. e. by the Eucharist, and the manna in the wilderness; which could not be if they could both be eaten worthily and unto life, if both were alike means of grace and salvation.

"I am the living Bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "Which I will give," as implying the voluntary offering of His life. "No man taketh it from Me." "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again⁶." And "for the life of the world;" because, as Theophylact says, "as far as lieth in Him, the whole world is sanctified⁷." And it is here in the future, "I will" give, as alluding both to His death, which had not yet occurred, and to the Eucharist, which was not yet appointed: whereas our Lord had before spoken of their already partaking of that Bread, by coming to Him, and believing in Him; whereby He has been, throughout this discourse, gradually preparing their minds,

⁶ John x. 18.

⁷ Aur. Cat.

by faith in Him, to that most solemn Institution of His kingdom. Now also He dwells on this, although it was as yet future, and in words which, although in themselves clear and emphatic, yet could not be comprehended, till they were fulfilled by His death, and by that appointment consequent upon it. Such was His custom in many cases. "I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." "These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them^s." Thus, before the Institution of Baptism, He conversed on its high import to Nicodemus: thus He spoke to them of the Transfiguration before it came to pass: thus often of His sufferings: thus of sending the Comforter: thus He spake of His Body given for them on the night before His death. All of which, like the typical ordinances of the Old Law, could not be understood till His kingdom was established.

With regard to the statement of some modern writers, that the ancient Fathers themselves do not apply this discourse generally, nor even this passage itself, to the Holy Eucharist, such an assertion would appear at once very strange and improbable, prior to any examination into such authorities. For that they who interpreted the "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer concerning the Eucharist, and with such quick spiritual discernment loved to catch at the most distant intimations of it, should turn aside and decline from our Lord's most strong and large declarations of the Bread being Himself and His Flesh, and suppose that He spoke not of it, were indeed incomprehensible. If any thing could countenance such an opinion, it were, that those ancient writers do not make explicit declarations concerning it, as not supposing it

^s John xiv. 29; xvi. 1. 4.

questionable, as persons do not at all times express a truth which stands the most broadly and familiarly before their minds, or take any pains to point out that sun in the heavens, in the full light of which they live. Thus, as Cornelius well observes, St. Augustin passes by the literal and obvious meaning, as being apparent to all, when he dwells on the more obscure, subtle, and sublime; speaking of that spiritual communion in Christ's Passion, by which we are incorporated into that One Body and become One Bread. The same writer has truly said, that it were indeed incredible that Christ, if He meant nothing more than believing in Him, should render a matter, otherwise clear and easy to be understood, obscure by words and metaphors of eating Flesh and drinking Blood; when He saw that for this cause many would be offended, and even disciples depart. Further, it may be said, that if our Lord had intended here to speak of that Holy Sacrament, one does not see how it would have been possible for the same to be expressed in words more strongly or more clearly. Every word is emphatic and distinct. As Theophylact observes, "He does not say the Bread which I will give is the sign of My Flesh, but My Flesh: for that Bread is changed, through the mystical Benediction, and the accession of the Holy Spirit, into the Flesh of the Lord." Again, our Lord here distinctly speaks not only of that Bread being His own Flesh, but afterwards still more particularly of the necessity not only of eating His Flesh, but also of drinking His Blood. Moreover, it has been well observed, that if St. John does not here speak of the Eucharist, he never does; which could not be supposed of that beloved disciple, who lay on his Master's breast at that Eucharistic Supper. Whereas this discourse, which he gives respecting the Eucharist, is precisely

similar and parallel to his testimony concerning Baptism : for there, in like manner, he does not mention the institution itself, but records the discourse with Nicodemus respecting its high and mysterious import. Thus does he here, in like manner; bringing forth the two foundation-stones or pillars of the Church, as the great Evangelist, Divine, Apostle, and Prophet.

Why the discourse should not have this meaning, it is impossible to discover, unless we are to prefer the party opinions of modern controversialists to the undoubted testimony and analogy of Holy Scripture, confirmed by the authority of the ancient Church, as has been frequently shown by an unbroken chain of testimony, that embraces the name of almost every Father worthy of attention from the beginning⁹. Not, of course, that any of them would so explain the whole of the discourse, as Ludolphus¹ rightly maintains; or indeed confine even any part to nothing but a Sacramental meaning; for neither in Scripture nor in the Church is God ever tied to His own ordinances; but that incidentally they so refer to the Sacrament of the altar as to show that they do not doubt or exclude this sense.

“The Jews therefore contended among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” Taking our Lord’s expressions in a gross carnal sense, as Nicodemus had said, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” As the Samaritan woman, “Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.” When a little before He spoke of Himself as the Bread from heaven, they “murmured among themselves;” but now, when He comes to a still deeper and further mystery,

⁹ See Maldon. ad loc.

¹ Vita Christi, p. 297.

the expression is stronger,—they “contended.” Strange result, and wonderfully prophetic, that the very highest doctrine of Divine love should become the greatest cause of bitterness and strife; like the Gospel itself; yea, the very Gospel of the Gospel; sending forth “not peace, but a sword.” “How can it be?” is the very expression of unbelief. As St. Cyril says, “In matters so high, let us neither think nor ask how can it be? For this is a Jewish expression.” “When God worketh, let us not ask how, but leave to Him the way and the knowledge of His own work².” And St. Augustin, “They contended together because they understood not the Bread of concord, for it is through this Bread that God maketh men to be of one mind in a house³.”

“They murmured,”—they “contended,” when they heard of things so heavenly; and afterwards, in the bitterness of their hatred, these, “the men of His tabernacle,” seemed to say, in the words of Job, “Oh that we had of His flesh! We cannot be satisfied⁴.” And He took up the thoughts of their enmity, and turned them into the fruits of His own exceeding love: giving unto us of His own flesh, that we may be “satisfied;” having that Bread which alone satisfieth.

But now, so far from deprecating this their strife, or correcting them, as if they had misapprehended His words, our Lord states again still more strongly the very thing which had been to them the cause of their offence. “*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth*

² In Joan. L. iv. 362.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 6. In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 14.

⁴ See Greg. Mor. Job xxxi. 31.

My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." It is remarkable, that in this emphatic repetition the word "eating" is again expressed by a different word in the Greek (not *φάγη*, but *τρῶγων*), and implying still further, if possible, the act of corporeal manducation: indeed it is a word said in lexicons to be more properly applied to animals than men; but it is used afterwards in this Gospel. "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me⁵." It is the Flesh peculiarly of the Son of Man; of Him, Who, coming down from heaven, hath taken the Manhood into God, never to be divided: therefore there is, in this Sacrament, both a sign visible, and at the same time a spiritual communion: it is the resurrection both of body and soul. But the Eucharist is the cause of immortality, not physically, says Cornelius a Lapide, but morally; in the same way that good works are, by the indwelling of the Spirit. It is the moral instrument of resurrection, not physical; but the physical cause is, he says, the Godhead of Christ.

As in the death of Christ, His blood flowed, and was separated from His body; and as in natural food there is both meat and drink to sustain the body; so it is necessary, our Lord says, both to eat His flesh, and to drink His blood: thus, in His appointment afterwards, both were distinctly given; and St. Paul testifies to both as usual and essential, "So let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup⁶." And the partaking of this Sacrament is needful for all, except where some legitimate impediment intervenes: it is the appointed means of being sustained in Christ's mystical Body: although infants may be sufficiently united unto the same in Baptism;

⁵ John xiii. 18.

⁶ 1 Cor. xi. 28.

but as Baptism is necessary for spiritual birth, no less is the Eucharist for spiritual nourishment and support. Others, it may be, are by faith grafted, and by love sustained in the same without the ordinary means.

Thus as from Adam's flesh we derive temporal and eternal death, as being formed after his likeness; from union with the flesh of Christ we derive life, of both body and soul, as being made again after His Image. The world is dead in Adam, but I will die with it, that My dead Body may restore it; that My death may give it life. "I therefore," says St. Cyril, "Who am made Man, through My Flesh will raise up at the last day those that eat Me; for it is utterly impossible but that death and destruction should be overcome by Him Who naturally is life." And Gregory of Nyssa, "He Who always is, gives Himself to be eaten by us, that when we shall have received Him into ourselves, we may be made that which He is."

That this connexion of the Eucharist with the Resurrection was usual in the early Church is evident. Therefore the Nicene Council calls it "the symbol of resurrection:" St. Ignatius to the Ephesians, "the medicine of immortality, the antidote against death." St. Irenæus, that the Body of Christ in us is as the life-giving power latent in the seed that rots in the ground and then produces. "As bread out of the earth," says the same writer, "receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly; so also our bodies, receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of resurrection?" And "how do they deny that the flesh is capable of the gift of God Who is eternal life, which is

nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ; whence, as the Apostle says, we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." St. Cyril, that it is "the food that nourisheth to immortality;" and again, "that like wax which is melted and blended with other wax till all is one mass; so the flesh and blood of Christ is so mingled with him that receives it, that Christ is in him, and he in Christ." And to the same effect the earlier St. Cyril, St. Hilary, Tertullian, and others. Thus Theophylact, "For it is not the flesh of man simply, but of God; and it makes man divine by inebriating him as it were with divinity." And again, "We do not eat God simply, God being incorporeal; nor again the flesh of man simply, which would not profit us. But God having taken flesh into union with Himself, that flesh is quickening⁸."

And here again having passed from the expression of bread to another, yet still our Lord adheres to the allusion of food and drink. "*For My Flesh is truly meat, and My Blood is truly drink. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him.*" Truly meat as giving true life, in like manner as natural meat gives natural life; so St. Augustin takes it. "With meat and drink," he says, "men desire that they may not hunger nor thirst; but this is truly bestowed by no other meat and drink but that which renders those by whom it is taken immortal and incorruptible⁹." As the true Vine, the true Light, the true Tabernacle, in distinction from earthly shadows. But St. Cyril understands it as contrasted with the manna, and the miraculous water in the wilderness. "Why do we receive it within us?" says the same writer, "is it not that Christ may dwell in us bodily, by the participation and communion of His holy

⁸ Aur. Cat. O. T.

⁹ In Joan. Tr. xxvi.

flesh? For St. Paul says that the Gentiles are one body and joint-heirs of Christ; how are they one body? Because by sharing the Holy Eucharist they become one body with Him, even as each of the Apostles."

"Dwelleth in Me," or, properly, "abideth," implying permanence. It has been rightly observed by Cornelius, that this is a favourite expression of St. John's; as, "upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him;" and the same word, "the wrath of God abideth on him;" and, "His seed abideth in him;" and, "eternal life abiding in him;" "he that abideth in love abideth in God;" and again, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me¹:" with many other instances of the like kind. For to the beloved disciple all earthly things were shadows that abide not, from his ever looking on the truth, and on the Word of God that abideth for ever.

"He that eateth and drinketh," that is, as God requires him to do, and as God gives him opportunity and power to do, whether at the Eucharist or otherwise. For this discourse rests not in the Eucharistic partaking, but through those sacramental means passes on to the spiritual and mystic union in Christ, which is in the secret predestination of God, through communication with His passion. For the one may be done unworthily and unto death; but this cannot. Therefore on the latter St. Augustin mostly dwells in his Commentary; that all may press forward with fear and in trembling communicate. "The thing itself," he says, "of which it is the Sacrament, is for salvation to every one that partakes of it; for condemnation to none." "The Body of Christ," he adds, "is the

¹ John i. 33; iii. 36; xv. 4. 1 John iii. 9. 15. 24; iv. 15, 16.

society of Saints. On which account our Lord has chosen for the types of His Body and Blood things which become one out of many. Bread is a quantity of grains united into one mass; wine a quantity of grapes compressed together²." But in his sermons on the words he dwells on the Eucharist, saying, "The faithful recognize the Sacrament of the faithful³."

"He in Me and I in him," by a mutual, as it were, and reciprocal communion. "He gives Himself to us, and dwells in us," says Quesnel; "we give ourselves unto Him, and dwell in Him. He is the fulness of His Church, and His Church of Him."

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." "The mission of the Father implies," says Augustin, "the emptying of Himself and taking the form of a servant: yet keeping equality in nature of the Father and the Son. And as in this My humiliation I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me. Not by the same or similar equality, but through the grace of a mediator." "The Son, therefore," says St. Cyril, "is as light from light; so also life from life. And in like manner as those things which need light, the Father enlightens through the Son, and works in wisdom through the Son, so these things that are void of light the Father quickeneth through the Son as through His life⁴." "With Thee," it is said, "is the Fountain of life⁵;" and the Father being the Fountain of life, and having communicated that essential life to His Son; so that He also hath life in Himself, even as the Father hath, and is the Fountain of life as the Father, and therefore he that partakes of the Son partakes of that

² In Joan. Tr. xxvi. 17.

³ Serm. cxxxi. cxxxii. Ben.

⁴ Lib. iv. 18.

⁵ Ps. xxxvi. 9.

life which is in Him. As the Father is the Author of life, He communicates the same through the Son in the Holy Eucharist; whereby worthy partakers are made one with the Word made Flesh, with Him who is God and Man never to be divided. "If the Word," says St. Hilary, "is truly made Flesh, we truly receive the Word made Flesh in the Supper of the Lord." And again, "Of the truth, then, of the Body and Blood of Christ, no room for doubting remains: for by the declaration of our Lord Himself, and by the teaching of our own faith, the flesh is really flesh, and the blood really blood. And these being received and drunk are the cause that Christ dwelleth in us by His flesh. And we shall live by Him, according as He liveth⁶."

And thus after more fully dwelling on this high and inscrutable mystery our Lord comes again to that declaration which He had previously made; adding by the continued repetition great force to the doctrine. "*This is the Bread that cometh down from Heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead;*" not as they who partook of the manna, which was like any other temporal and earthly food that may keep off diseases and death for a time. "*He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever.*" "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever⁷." Thou "art the resurrection and the life." The expression here continually preserved, not of bread simply, but of bread come down from heaven, is much to be considered; this bread is His flesh, but He does not say His flesh came down from heaven, but bread; implying in this term more than the flesh, the Godhead in union with it, "the Word made Flesh." "He calls the bread His flesh," says St. Hilary, "that inasmuch as the bread came down from heaven, it

⁶ De Trin. viii. 13, 14.

⁷ Ps. lxxiii. 25.

might be seen that His body was not of human conception, but a heavenly body." And St. Ambrose, "How therefore doth the bread descend from heaven, and that living bread? Because the same Lord Jesus Christ is partaker both of Godhead and of a body; and thou who receivest His flesh in that nutriment partakest of His Divine substance⁸." And the same seems implied by Theophylact when he says that the mysterious name of "manna" signifies the Godhead and Manhood of Christ. While thus it forbids us by the very name, to inquire too closely into its nature. They that look too curiously into the ark of God will be smitten thereby.

"Oh, Truth, Who art Eternity!" exclaims St. Austin, "and Love, Who art Truth! and Eternity, Who art Love! All over I trembled with love and awe, as if I heard this Thy voice from on high: I am the food of grown men; grow, and thou shalt feed upon Me; nor shalt thou convert Me, like the food of thy flesh, into thee, but thou shalt be converted into Me⁹."

SECTION XIII

DISCIPLES OFFENDED

"*These things spake He in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.*" Other discourses in St. John, as that in the last chapter, seem as if they were delivered before some formal assembly or council, though it is not mentioned; and here it only seems to be introduced incidentally, though doubtless not so; and it is an interesting

⁸ De Sac. lib. vi. c. 1.

⁹ Conf. l. vii. c. 10.

and remarkable addition to the discourse. It is in the synagogue, before the assembly of the Jewish Church; it is the Gospel grafted on the synagogue, the doctrine of the Eucharist on that of the legal sacrifices; it is in Capernaum, "exalted to heaven" by His ministry, but falling to hell because they believed Him not.

"*Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying, Who can hear it?*" Many of His disciples, even in distinction, as St. Augustin supposes, from His enemies among the multitude who might have had even harsher thoughts. But these disciples were not it appears the Twelve. It might signify merely those disciples with whom He was now in company, in distinction from those Jews in the synagogue which He now seems to have left. The "hard saying" is all this wonderful mysterious union with Him consisting in the partaking of His body. But it could not be merely the difficulty of comprehending a deep mode of speech, for such is not of itself what would give offence; but it was the submission which it required of the understanding and the will to something too spiritual for its comprehension, for such implies the prostration and humiliation of the proudest endowment of man, the independence of reason. "It is hard," says Austin, "but only to the hard"¹⁰. They were carnally minded in that sense of which the Apostle speaks that "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him"¹¹.

"*When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He saith unto them, Doth this offend you?*

¹⁰ Serm. cxxxii.

¹¹ Rom. viii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

What then if ye should see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" I spoke of My body as bread that came down from heaven, if ye cannot accept this, what if ye shall receive confirmation of it by seeing Me ascend thither? Will ye not then believe that the Godhead is united to this flesh so as to render it the mysterious life of mankind. "By these words," says St. Augustin, "He hath disclosed the cause why they were offended. For they thought He spoke of giving them that His Body, which Body He said they should see ascend and that entire to heaven." And therefore it could not be that they were literally to eat of it in the sense they supposed, but after some high and spiritual manner. They had just now said, Is He not the Son of Joseph? And here the answer is given, No, He is not, He hath descended from heaven: and He shall ascend thither. Now no one hath ascended, but He Who first descended. This was an answer to their questionings. But the expression "ascend up where He was before" is not of course strictly spoken of the Manhood alone, but of Christ as God and man, implying, says St. Augustin, unity of person. "He was in heaven when He was speaking on earth. He was the Son of Man in heaven as He was the Son of God upon earth; the Son of God on earth by taking our flesh; the Son of Man in heaven by unity of person¹²."

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God¹," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God²." But the flesh of Christ

¹² In Joan. Tr. xxvii. 4.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 50.

² Rom. viii. 8.

is not as our flesh, but endued with the quickening Spirit that giveth life. It is remarkable that these same words, "the Spirit that quickeneth," are used by St. Paul of Christ respecting the resurrection. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit³." The flesh of man would indeed profit nothing, but it is the union of this flesh with the Godhead: and of this union you will see the proof when you behold the Son of Man ascend to heaven; then you will see how with this My flesh which I shall give to the world shall My Divine nature be instilled from heaven. As Elisha when he saw Elijah ascend had a double power, when you see Me ascending, and in faith afterwards behold Me ascended, you shall know this power of the Eucharist of which I speak. Thus shall you touch Me when I have ascended, and thus from My glorified body shall derive power of resurrection, and become partakers of the Divine nature.

St. Athanasius says, "He put them in mind of the Ascension of the Son of Man into heaven, that He might draw them off from carnal and corporeal senses, and that they might learn that His flesh, which He called meat, was from above." They understood not, says Augustin, that He spake of His flesh as quickened by the Spirit. Whereas in like manner, as "knowledge puffeth up" and profiteth not when alone, but when combined with charity then it doth: so the flesh doth not profit when alone, but when united with the Spirit⁴. And in another place he says, It is the Word made flesh that quickeneth, not flesh of itself. In like manner St. Cyril, "It is the body of Christ that quickens, and by participation of itself brings back incorruption. For it is not the body

³ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

⁴ In Joan. Tr. xxvii.

of any one else, but of Life Itself: retaining the virtue of the incarnate Word, and full of His power by Whom all things live and have their being⁵." But St. Chrysostom takes it differently, that He who understands our Lord's words carnally is profited nothing. For to understand mysteries we must judge of them spiritually by the inward eye. "What then?" he says, "Is it not real flesh? Yea, verily. In saying then that the flesh profiteth nothing, He does not speak of His own flesh, but that of the carnal hearer of His word⁶." St. Augustin also admits this meaning; "If thou understandest My words spiritually, they are life and spirit to thee; if carnally, even then they are life and spirit, but not to thee⁷." Dr. Jackson thus explains it, "That Christ's virtual presence, or the influence of life, which His human nature was to distil from His heavenly throne, should be more profitable to such as were capable of it than His bodily presence." "His distillation of life and immortality from His glorified human nature is that which the ancient Church did mean in their figurative speeches of Christ's real presence, or of eating His very flesh and drinking His very blood in the Sacrament⁸."

"*But there are some of you that believe not.*" He does not say, Who understand not, says Augustin, but who believe not; mentioning the cause of their not understanding, for comprehension of His words depended on faith. St. Chrysostom notices that our Lord had at first said to them all generally, "Ye have seen Me and believe not:" but now His expression is, "Some of you believe not." For this was spoken to His disciples with whom He had now privately retired. St. Augustin

⁵ Lib. iii. c. 37.

⁷ In Joan. Tr. xxvii.

⁶ In Joan. Hom. xlvi. 3.

⁸ Vol. iii. p. 333.

thinks that these disciples were the Twelve alone, and that they "who believed not," of whom He speaks, referred only to Judas. But it seems evident from what follows that it was said to more than the Twelve: for He, after these had left Him, speaks to the Twelve alone. And so St. Chrysostom takes it. "*For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.*" From the beginning of the world He knew who would never believe on Him nor be saved, and yet He made them: from the beginning of His teaching He knew which of His own chosen Apostles should betray Him, yet He chose him and made him an Apostle: and notwithstanding the unbelief and the apostasy which He foresaw, yet He dealt with them graciously, and took all pains for their conversion and salvation as with others. Whatever speculative difficulties this may be encompassed with, they belong to natural religion as well as to revealed; but the latter in connexion with it discloses the incomprehensible mystery of God's secret predestination, as in what follows.

"*And He said, On this account I said unto you,*"—and so often repeated in the Synagogue,—"*that no one can come to Me unless it be given unto him of My Father.*" St. Chrysostom supposes this spoken in Divine dignity, as if He had said, But this your unbelief disturbs Me not, nor alarms Me; for I know it from the beginning. St. Augustin's observation on it is, "So that even to believe is given us. If thou hast believed rejoice, but be not lifted up; for what hast thou which thou didst not receive?" From the allusion to the traitor some suppose that it was this discourse which first offended Judas; and that this was the reason of his being now referred to. It was at all events intimately connected

with the subject: these Jews had eagerly desired to follow Christ and to make Him a king, as looking for some temporal benefits; but on finding that Christ's gifts were spiritual they were disappointed and offended. So was it with Judas.

“*From this,*” i. e. from this time or this circumstance, “*many of His disciples went back, and no longer walked with Him.*” They went back, they fell away from the faith; and walked no more with Him, i. e. in external conduct also they showed themselves no longer Christ's followers. Epiphanius mentions St. Mark and St. Luke to have been of this number; but this was probably a mistake, merely founded on the supposition that they were then disciples, but not of the twelve. And indeed there is no proof even of this; on the contrary, St. Mark is said to have never seen or heard Christ, but to have been subsequently converted by St. Peter, who calls him his “son.”

Thus at the end of two years of teaching and miracles our Lord was left as it were alone. The multitudes murmured; disciples were offended. What good man then would look for success in this world? “They departed,” says St. Augustin, “not few, but many. This happened perchance for our consolation; for it sometimes happens that a man may speak the truth; and what he says is not received, and they who hear are offended and depart. And the man is grieved that he so hath spoken; and he says within himself, I ought not thus to speak. Yet this was the case with the Lord. He spake, and lost many. Let us find consolation in the Lord, and yet let us speak with caution¹.”

“*Jesus therefore said unto the Twelve, Do ye also wish*

⁹ 1 Pet. v. 13.

¹ In Joan. Tr. xxvii. 8.

to go away?" "Therefore," that is in consequence of the other disciples having gone away. He asked them mournfully, as it were, on account of these desertions, as one feeling such bereavement; and in order to bring out their faith and love, and thereby to bind to Himself more closely the remnant that was left. Indeed, our Lord's thus asking the Twelve whether they also would go, seems like the counterpart or strong typical representation of His conduct in His moral Providence, wherein He seems to constrain no one to stay with Him, but leaves it to our own free will and choice; nay, more than this, He seems to speak to us therein in a half-complaining tone, as of one deserted and needing us; as "one in whose mouth are no reproofs," though He had all day long stretched forth His hands in vain: thus throughout His Prophets to the remnant that are left;—thus every morning does He seem to say to us, Will ye also go away? when any one stays back from the honours and riches of the world, which others seek, in order to be with Him. Thus was it when St. Paul said, "All seek their own." "Demas hath forsaken me. Only Luke is with me."

"Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go?" He speaks for himself and for all in the plural number, To whom shall we go, and to what shall we go? For Thy sake have we given up all things; we have none to go to; and in Thee we have found rest. Peter answers out of love for them all, says Chrysostom; as more strong in faith, says St. Cyril; others, as more fervent in love of Christ; it was indeed, as at all times, from a sort of zeal and natural pre-eminence in St. Peter. To whom shall we go? it was a speech of very great love, says St. Chrysostom. Give us another as Thyself, says

Augustin, if we are to leave Thee. They had indeed parents or relatives to go to; they had their trade to go to: and if they needed teachers, they had the Doctors of the Law to go to; but what were these to those who had tasted of celestial truth? What but deeper desolation by the contrast? But the answer of the many always is, Why should we come to Thee while we have the world to go to?

“Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” We believe, and then by believing we come by experience and proof to knowledge; it is here an emphatic combination of terms, as expressive of a strong assurance. We believe and know,—because we believe, therefore we understand and know,—that Thou art the Christ the Son of God; that is, says Augustin, “that Thou art Eternal Life Itself, and that what Thou givest by Thy Flesh and Blood, is but what Thou Thyself art².” Though we understand not Thy words, yet we receive and believe them, as knowing, most assuredly, that therein is life as they come from Thee. But from the expression, “Thou hast the words of eternal life,” with reference to that discourse which had offended others, it is evident that accurate knowledge is not the thing needed, but a spiritual understanding of the heart, which is by faith; for St. Peter could not have known the meaning of our Lord’s words, inasmuch as they referred to the Sacrifice of His death, and that life-giving Sacrament, of which St. Peter and the rest as yet knew nothing. But this confession of St. Peter is not followed by that peculiar blessing which our Lord bestows on him before the close of the following year, on his making the same declaration at

² In Joan. Tr. xxvii.

Cesarea Philippi. Some suggest that there is a distinction, in this being spoken in the person of all the Twelve; whereas that was more his own individual confession; but this does not appear to be the case; it was then said, "Whom do ye say that I am?" The fact is, there are degrees in this faith, which are known to the Searcher of hearts, and this was not yet such as to have received that high acceptance. Already after the last miracle they had said, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." Nor could we suppose that he who walked the waters with his Lord, could afterwards have departed from Him. But now it is very remarkable, that instead of the blessing, our Lord's answer conveys fearful warning.

"Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you Twelve, and of you one is a devil? Now He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, though he was one of the Twelve" (John). Ye speak for all the Twelve, yet among that number, though you know it not, is one that hath a devil. Be not high-minded, but fear. It may contain some singular admonition to St. Peter himself: it was when he said, "Though all shall be offended, yet will I never be offended," that our Lord added the warning of his denial; and here, while all were deserting, perhaps St. Peter might be tempted to that confidence in himself from which he fell. And, as addressed to all the Apostles, the declaration was such as to render them most humble and most anxious; for they knew not, nor even suspected who it was, so that each might secretly fear for himself. "When He spoke generally," says St. Cyril, "of the weight of wickedness so great hanging over one, He renders all careful, and excites them by horror to greater vigilance."

Are we to suppose, then, that Judas had now enter-

tained any thing of that purpose of treason which he afterwards evinced? There is no reason to infer this, but perhaps to the All-seeing Eye the seed of it was already discernible. For now while others were deserting, what motive had Judas for staying in attendance upon Christ? It might have been, even now, because he carried the bag, and wished not to relinquish it. This circumstance would add a force to many expressions lately used; if even now one of the Twelve was adhering to Him for the sake of the bread that perisheth, while He spoke of the Bread that endureth.

Some ask why our Lord chose Judas, knowing that he would betray Him; and St. Augustin answers, that he might be "the involuntary and unconscious instrument of the greatest good," in his Lord's death and the Redemption of Mankind; but perhaps it need not be thus considered, for of all evil we know that final good will be educed. But the question is a broad one, why does God elect as His children by creation, and as His children by grace, those who will be finally reprobate? The case is but one of these, nor need it be separately considered, as it is merged in that general subject; but it sets before us Christ in choosing him thus as the same God Who is our God in nature and in grace, yet Whose ways are unsearchable and past finding out; nor do we pretend to know them, but "rejoice with trembling" in the midst of fearful mysteries.

It is very remarkable, that as so much is said of the Holy Eucharist being "a savour of life and also unto death," that even discourse respecting it works awfully in the same effects; even in the very discussion respecting it, in some marvellous manner it seems to give life, or to increase condemnation and death; to deepen, to seal, to

fill with judgment: like the manifestation of Godhead; as the sun in the heavens, if an object be but exposed to its beams, quickens or corrupts, softens or hardens, increases vegetation or putrefaction. What St. Cyprian says of unworthy partakers is true in a degree even of unworthy hearers or disputers, that they "profane the Holy Body of the Lord, are not themselves sanctified; fall deeper, not to be restored; wounded more grievously, not healed³." Thus on this occasion not only does the discourse have these awful effects on the disciples generally, that some go back and fall away; but even among the Twelve, it powerfully precipitates; it brings forth fearfully, for the first time, the light and the shade: in St. Peter the blessed confession unto life; and of Judas the first disclosure as having a devil; though all as yet and long after unknown to themselves. After this discourse on the Bread which Christ will give, it is said, "One of you is a devil;" in another year it is said by this Evangelist, "After the sop Satan entered into him."

What great reason, then, is there for fear and caution when this awful doctrine is discussed!

³ Ep. xv. ad Mar.

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